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ROMAN PICTURES

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ROMAN PICTURES

by

PERCY LUBBOCK

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ROMAN PICTURES

I. FONTANA DELLE TARTARUGHE

I FOUND MYSELF LOITERING BY THAT pretty little Fountain of the Tortoises, not for the first time; but this time (it was an afternoon of late April, long years ago) I looked stupidly at the boys and the tortoises and the dripping water, with a wish in my mind for something more. But what? I had drifted hither and thither about Rome, from the Gate of the People to the Baths of Caracalla—drifted day after day in my solitude through a month of April more divinely blue and golden than the first spring-days of the world; and whether I was in the body or out of the body I scarcely knew, for I moved in a great bubble of imagination that I had never known the like of in all the years (perhaps twenty) of my life before I came to Rome. I had escaped from the poor chamber of myself; for the imagination I dreamed and revelled in was surely none of my own. It was of the spirit of all time, livelier, lovelier than I could say, a power and a freedom that a rather lean young soul, ignorantly aspiring, may enter into and take possession of unconsciously, without an effort—in Rome.

But I do remember lingering about the Fountain of the Tortoises at last, between sun and shadow, with a wish that something now, something or some one, would break into my solitude and my dream; not that I was tired of either, but because my dream and

my solitude would be still more beautiful if I could look at them for an hour across an interval, across the kind of division that is created by—yes, exactly!—by the sight to which I presently raised my eyes, turning away from the dapple and ripple of the fountain. A young man, passing across the square, met my blank gaze at this moment and suddenly threw out a sign of recognition; and I saw with surprise that it was my precious Deering, of whose presence in Rome I had been quite unaware. Deering it was!—after four or five lonely weeks, in which I had never happened to see a face that I knew, it was Deering who linked me to the real world again by crossing the Square of the Tortoises at that hour of that afternoon. I had left my shining bubble in a flash (he hadn't noticed it) and joined hands with common life.

We weren't really on terms of intimacy; but in the strangeness of Rome our little English acquaintance had the air of a cordial friendship. I gushed over with a warmth that surprised me and that would have been impossible at home; the fountain and the palaces and the Roman sunshine had pushed me forward into a familiarity that I shouldn't have ventured upon elsewhere. He was of my own age, but so much more exquisite and mannerly that I looked raw indeed at his side; I was an aspiring amateur, he was a citizen of the world. At school I had tried to avoid him, because I had courted (vainly, vainly) the society of the more fashionable and the less refined; but I was eager enough to seize him by both hands in my new freedom and to take advantage of his riper experience. "Why, *Deering*—!" He *did* look experienced, with his broad-brimmed hat and his neat black clothes, as I moved

towards him and directed my greeting, a little too effusively.

He took it with a brilliant smile, he whipped off his hat and held it to his stomach. "Eh, come sta?" he said, standing bare-headed; "è pezzo pezzo che non ci vediamo." He fluted the words with mellifluous assurance, and I did my best to meet his humour with my own poor bits and shreds of Italian. There were no flute-notes in *my* repertory; but I made a jest of my round British style and mouthed out some attempt at a Roman compliment. As quick as thought he countered it with another; and that was surely enough of the joke—the joke of our standing there bare-headed, flourishing our hats at each other with Italian airings; so I let loose my pent-up English talk, after those weeks of unnatural silence, and tumbled out exclamation and question as they came—I was voluble, enjoying the release of the tongue, and there were forty things I wanted to say and hear, for this meeting was quite unexpected and exceedingly opportune; and so I chattered forth my surprise and pleasure, and then—and then I found them left upon my hands, somehow, and I looked rather a fool.

"Ma senta, senta," said Deering. He smiled, but he was firm. He couldn't deal with me on these insular terms in Rome; he made me feel it without explanation, but the fact was that he simply couldn't allow me to be so inappropriate, so falsely attuned to the time and place. There we stood in the heart of Rome, with the palaces of princes around us, secluded among winding streets all dark with wicked history; and here was Deering, disguised as a Roman himself, with a great black hat and a suit of dead-black clothes; and I had stuttered out my poor innocent school-talk, college-gossip, heaven knows

what, a scrannel-pipe to the suave warble of his flute. Had I come all the way to Rome to be still a British undergraduate even there? Well, as for that, he very soon put it right. He was kindness itself, but he had the upper hand of me in these foreign parts, where he was so serenely at home and I so ecstatically at sea. His was the advantage, as indeed I quite understood, and he used it from the first. He gently set me in my place, not without an indulgent smile.

"Senta, senta pure," he said—or words to that effect; whatever they were they keenly struck me as the very words I had wanted and missed in my ignorant solitude. That was the way to talk to a Roman; I might have missed it for ever, but Deering had picked it up, no doubt, the first time he put on his broad-brimmed hat. How long had he been in Rome? I was allowed to ask that question at least, and it appeared that he had come to Rome for a week, six months before, and had stayed on and on because he had happened to find rooms that pleased him. They were far from the "English ghetto," so he said, meaning that they were far from the hotels and the Piazza di Spagna and touristry in general; and he had just finished his siesta and was on his way to a café in the Via Nazionale, where he usually spent some hours of the afternoon. And I, where was I going? As a matter of fact I had vaguely thought of wandering away and away, out of the city and into the country—from whence I should return in the dusk, luxuriously tired, solemnly enraptured, to climb the long stairs to my own little lodging, my Arcadian meal and couch. But this I concealed from Deering; I felt at once I must protect my dear sentimental delights from his ironic eye. Moreover *my* lodging, which I had thought so

knowingly Roman, proved to be full in the middle of the English ghetto; I kept this too from him as long as I could.

His siesta, his café, his rooms remote from the vulgar—oh I had such a vision, as he mentioned these, of the kind of Roman career that I had failed to go in for hitherto. Deering *lived* in Rome, I had floated on the surface. Never mind—I threw over my private romance and adopted Deering's reality on the spot. He seemed to be immensely informed, and there was a charming insolence in his wisdom; I might put my tenderest fancies behind me and screen them in his presence, but he saw that I was a soft young enthusiast, and he patronized me with the sweetness of his coo, his smile, his winning gesture. He delicately blasted whatever had appeared to me of interest and renown, he showed me the crudity of my standards. I might feel a passing twinge, for I hadn't been used to regarding myself as a thing with which Deering could be indulgent and amused. And yet I was flattered, I was magnified by his fastidious irony; it brought me into a new world of mind and taste, more exclusive than my own.

But I obviously couldn't give way to him in the matter of being so very Italian that we mightn't talk our own language. He could take me into another world, but to endow me at the same time with a new speech was a miracle beyond him. "Ma come, ma come," he said encouragingly; he implied that in the real life of illumination we are all free of the golden tongue, the tongue of the clear Latin *civiltà*. It seemed he could hardly frame his lips to the uncouth noises of the northern Goth. He brought out an English phrase with an air of handing it over to me between disgustful finger-tips, and

he relapsed unconsciously as he did so into the sweeter idiom. Ah Deering, Deering! That unconsciousness of his was a finished performance, I could believe he had practised it before the glass. "But you, my dear," he said, "you surely speak the language like the rest of us —eh magari!" I confessed that I spoke the language like a barbarian fresh from my native wild; I should listen to him and the rest of them with pleasure, but to me he must talk our poor old English. "And who *are* the rest of you?" I demanded.

He answered my question at some length, inadvertently recovering his former tongue. In six months of Roman life he had made many friends; he had fallen into a circle that suited him as aptly as his rooms. "I scarcely know how it happened," he said, "but I seemed to find my feet here from the first." He apparently attributed a great deal of his fortune to the café of the Via Nazionale; a right instinct had taken him there in the beginning, and thereafter all had run smoothly. He had met a journalist, he had met an actor or a lawyer or a doctor—anyhow he had met somebody whom the ordinary Cook-driven tourist, slaving round the ruins and the galleries, would have missed infallibly; and so he had entered a company which belonged—he insisted on it—to the *real* Rome, the city unsuspected of our gaping countrymen. His secret was to "live the life of the place," he said; and let there be no mistake, the life of the place is to be found among the shops and tramways of the business quarter, nowhere else. It must be owned that in Rome a stranger runs many a risk of overlooking the true life on these terms, which are the terms that Deering laid down with high lucidity; for even if you avoid the

ghetto of the tourist on one hand, and the romantic desolation of the Campagna (to which I myself was addicted) on the other, you may still make a further mistake—and I put it to Deering that it really depends on what you *call* the life of Rome. There is the community of the "student," for example; and I should have thought that Deering, with his rare vein of taste in the arts, would haunt the workshops of young sculptors, ragged painters and poets—weren't they as plentiful in Rome as summer flies?

I had interrupted Deering's exposition; he wanted to tell me more about the ease with which he had dropped into the heart of Rome. But he broke away from that, with another of his patient intelligent smiles, to explain to me how much I failed to understand. There was no more any life of *that* kind in Rome—no romantic art. Did I think that those horrible theatrical old men, those bedizened little boys and girls, who still loaf upon the Spanish Steps and waylay the foreigner—did I think they were genuine "models," waiting for real painters to carry them off and paint them? I supposed then that I was living in the Rome of Hans Andersen and Nathaniel Hawthorne? He abounded in his sarcasm. Ragged poets indeed! My notion of the *vie de Bohème* was a little behind the times, fifty years or so. "Ah you live in books," said Deering—he rallied me on it; "in Rome you must come out of books—I shall drag you out of Hawthorne." As a matter of fact he knew the young poets of Rome, he had several friends among them; it was no use my looking for them in garrets and operatic wine-cellars near the Tiber; the Via Nazionale was the place, vulgar as I thought it with its crowds and trams and plate-glass—and he was off again, with his

sweet flat voice and his neat enunciation, describing the extraordinary favour that the journalists had shown him, or perhaps the actors.

It was remarkable, he said, how they accepted him as one of themselves. "There seems to be something of the Italian in me," he mentioned once or twice, "nothing to be proud of!"—and he smiled with pride. I could honestly tell him that there was at least nothing English in his appearance, since he had taken to powdering his nose and to clothing himself like an undertaker. The remark about his nose I indeed reserved, but my allusion to his clothes was a happy one. He immediately glanced with quiet approval at his hands, and I remembered how in earlier years, when we were both small boys at school, he had once pointed out to me that he had hands "like a Botticelli." He ought to have been grateful to me for the self-restraint I had shown in withholding that confidence from the light. I had been surprisingly discreet, I had never used his Botticelli hands against him in our free-spoken circle, and I was glad of it now. Here in Rome, set free from the old snobberies of boyhood, I was ready to take his hands quite seriously, and even the paste of powder with which he had corrected the tint (inclining rather to Rubens) of his nose. His black clothes were designed to set off his elegant wrists and tapering fingers; and if a nose invariably scorched by the sun was a weight on his mind, as I know it was, he found support in the well-drawn oval of his face. He was not very tall, and unfortunately he was not very slender; it was only too plain to see that before long he would be plump. But nevertheless he might reasonably tell himself that his figure, as he stood by the fountain and thoughtfully eyed his hands, had a hint and

a suggestion, I don't say more, of something you might call—of something he hoped I was calling—a lily-droop, swaying lightly.

I can see him bend and sway accordingly; and I can recall the bright stream of sensation in my own mind, where the old desire to scoff at his elegancies had apparently changed to respect and envy. What a free world, I thought, what a liberal and charming, in which a stupid prejudice could dissolve and drop away so quickly! Perhaps I didn't quite understand that my respect was not so much for Deering as for myself, not so much for Deering's pretty graces as for my own emancipation; but my envy of his Italian ease and competence was indeed sincere. I would seize, yes I would, such an opportunity of learning, discovering, experiencing; I would follow Deering, accept his guidance and pay him his price—for his price was a small one, merely a little tacit backing of his own view of himself. He would expect me to agree with him that his face had a species of haunting charm; he would expect me, at any rate, not to imply that it hadn't. It was a trifling indemnification for the many times he had been told in former days that he had a face like a rabbit. I would gladly support him in abolishing the memory of all that ribaldry; I should be rewarded by observing my own tolerance with satisfaction and by becoming acquainted at the same time with this "real Rome" of Deering's—he was still fluting on about its reality.

We shuffled for a while to and fro across the sunny little square. Now and then a bare-headed woman came pattering by, twisting her neck for a firm round stare at us as she went; children looked on from a distance, struck dumb in their play by our oddity. Deering

talked and talked; he too felt the relief of uttering himself, no doubt—for I could well believe that the real Rome didn't supply a listener who understood him as I did. Not one of those actors or poets, for example, could measure the difference between Deering of old, flouted and derided, and this remarkable young personage, ornament of a strange society, who was now willing to be the patron of such as I. Deering talked, I appreciated the difference; I did my part with a will, and he bloomed in the warmth of my recognition. For six months, moreover, he had been displaying the new, the very newest culture, and his associates hadn't really been in a position to perceive it. An Englishman who avoided the old ruins and churches, who sat through the April afternoon at a marble-topped table—why his companions would of course take him for an Englishman who behaved, for a wonder, in a natural and commendable fashion; and this was where I again came in so aptly, for I could do justice to the originality and the modernity of his proceeding. It wasn't as though Deering sat in a café because he knew no better, because he was the kind of person whose ideas are bounded by plush and gilt and plate-glass. He sat there, avoiding the nightingales on the Aventine, the sunset in the Campagna, because he knew all that and more, and because the rarity of the perversity of his culture led him back again, round again, to the scream of the tramway in the "business quarter." I, who had watched him of old, could be trusted to distinguish these niceties; there it was that I came into the game, and he didn't hesitate—he brought me into play.

"Yes," he murmured, musing gently upon my state of romance, "yes, I should like to drag you out of

literature once for all. Come out of your books, come to Rome—come with me." I could truthfully say that I would go with pleasure; and as for my books, I was quite willing to let him label me as he chose—I accepted the part for which he cast me. I was the victim of the romantic fallacy, and it all came of my looking for life in antiquated fiction—in Zola even, in Zola as like as not—instead of looking for it in the raw red world: such was the part he assigned me, and I have ever been one to fall in with an arrangement of this kind. People, I long ago found, are never happy till they have decided that you are this or that, some recognizable type; and for yourself the line of least resistance is always to let them have their way. In my time I have played many parts, acting up to the theory and the expectation of my different companions; it saves trouble, it spares one the effort of assertion. There are even those with whom I have been able to assume the very attitude that Deering had now adopted towards me, the attitude of a liberal patron towards a muddle-headed young innocent; and then I have patronized as glibly as I now submitted. Deering saw in the look with which I answered him the exact shade of awkward modesty that he demanded. It was well; he approved my fluency in the part that had fallen to me.

It was settled, then, that he was to hale me out of my sentimental twilight into the broad noon of reality; I had lived for too long in a dream, and now he promised himself the amusement of dispelling my illusions. So be it; I told him I asked nothing better than to follow his lead, and I told myself that at least I had a sharper eye for the "facts of life" (my phrase) than ever Deering would have. We were both well-pleased,

therefore; and I wonder at which of us the spirit of Rome, glancing that afternoon over the Square of the Tortoises, smiled and chuckled most benignly. It was Deering at any rate, of the two of us, who made the more intricate object of study; anybody might be drawn, even Rome, to pause and consider him as a child of his time. When he slipped his arm through mine and daintily drew me forward on our way—the way to reality!—I don't think the first comer would have guessed that he was about to become my sponsor in the raw red world. His graceful hands seemed rather to flutter in deprecation of any world more earthly than the sea-pallor, say, of a sunrise in the manner of Botticelli. But that, for Deering, was just the fun of it. Of the sea-pale dawn he could honestly say, and he did say, "J'ai passé par là"; in an earlier stage of his culture he had duly swooned in the ecstasy of the burnished moment, the discriminated pulse of the perfected sensation; but at that time he had worn an Eton jacket, and years had flown since then, and by now his eye-lids were more than a little weary of the raptures he had outlived. He, more precocious than I, had left his books at the moment when I was making the first discovery of mine; he no longer read any books at all, he told me, and if he didn't add that life was his book it was only because the phrase, when he was about to utter it struck him as old-fashioned and obvious. "'Youth's sweet-scented manuscript'—you remember?"—he ventured on that, guarding himself with a slightly acid intonation of the pretty words.

And so Deering turned me away from the ilex-shadows and grey spaces of an evening on the Aventine and in the further country; he clung to my arm and

directed me to the clatter of the city, and that was how it all began. He gave me a push, with his benediction, and one thing led to another, and I started to collect some Roman pictures of a new sort. I stored away my more sentimental bits and notes of impression, carefully saving them from the eye of Deering; I laid them aside, and certainly they are not worth disturbing again at this late hour. But as for these others, the new sort, I think it might be amusing to bring them briefly to the light, one by one; though I don't pretend that even with Deering to point the way I penetrated far into Rome or the world either. After all his offers to induct and indoctrinate me, nothing came of them to speak of; I saw not a sign of rawness or redness, that I can remember—so I suppose I must conclude that the heart of life escaped me still. But even the fringes of life, if that is all they were, seemed strange and memorable in Rome; nobody who lived in Rome, nobody who breathed the golden air as a matter of course, nobody who trod the sacred soil as an everyday affair, could be less than a wonder to a rather lean young northern soul, whose lodging in the Piazza di Spagna had only been hired by the month. The spring days were endless, but they flashed away faster than I could count; presently they would all be gone, and I should have to leave Rome to the few free happy creatures, such as Deering, who could stay because they liked it, stay in Paradise because they happened to prefer it—I should think they might! As Deering and I, arm in arm, left the square and the babbling fountain, I was quite overcome by my jealousy of his detachment from cares and ties, from the stupid thrums of responsibility that so soon drag most of us away from the Rome of our desire.

"So here you are living in Rome," I said dejectedly, "with nothing to prevent you from staying for ever." Deering was his own master, I knew, and he sedulously cultivated a frosty indifference to any claims at home, such as they were, that might have hampered him. I didn't exactly admire his ruthless way, but I certainly envied it. I should like to have had that faculty of ignoring, blankly and serenely, what I chose to ignore; it would have been a great convenience. All I needed was a little of Deering's real independence of opinion; for I can't think I was embarrassed by many good warm qualities of heart and temper. Deering was no unkinder than I, only bolder, more secure in his power to stand alone. And then he had another immense advantage; he could always be sympathetically impressed by his own performance, he was an excellent audience of himself. "Living in Rome?" he echoed—"you don't know me! I shall take to the road again before long. But you're not tormented, as I am, by the gypsy in the blood. There are times when I envy the like of you, the decent, the home-keeping——" He broke off with a sigh—a sigh in which I could almost hear the involuntary murmur of applause. Yes, the gypsy in the blood was a good stroke, and I think a new one.

WHEN WE PRESENTLY SWUNG OPEN the plate-glass door of the café that had done so much for Deering, he was manifestly anxious—suppose that just on this afternoon it should fail of its effect! For his sake as well as for my own I hoped we should find reality there as usual. He glanced searchingly among the tables, most of which were crowded about by hot and talkative men; there was a tremendous rattle of conversation in all parts of the big pillared saloon. He paused for a moment, and then he nodded with relief in the direction of a distant corner; he twisted his way there between the tables, I followed him, and we found a gap upon a plush seat, under a huge mirror painted with sprays of climbing water-lilies. We squeezed ourselves into the vacant space with polite apologies, and Deering immediately introduced me to a young man who sat facing us, a big young man with a low collar and a straw hat much too small for him. Deering mentioned his name, "Mr. Bannock," and Mr. Bannock extended a large hand and said he was happy to meet me.

He was a young and rather common American; he smiled upon me with a wide mouthful of teeth and said he was pleased to make my acquaintance. I began to respond as I could, but he interrupted me to say that he was glad to know a friend of "our friend Mr. Deering." I began again, but he broke in to observe that our friend Mr. Deering was a lovely man. I rejoined that Deering was quite the loveliest of—— "And I can tell you something about him that you may not know," said Mr. Bannock, spreading his palm at Deering as though he were showing off a picture; "our friend Mr. Deering

is not only a lovely man, he is a great artist—and I go further, I say that Mr. Deering possesses the most remarkable understanding of, and sympathy with, the mentality of the artist that it has ever been my lot to encounter. And when I assert that even an old friend of Mr. Deering like yourself may be ignorant of that side of his character, I am thinking of that positively damnable modesty of his, which has prevented him, which always *will* prevent him——" But I can't do justice to the turn of the periods of Mr. Bannock, which coiled around and around me like an anaconda, slowly deadening my attention. Between the limber muscularity of his phrases and the glittering crescent of his teeth I was numbed and fascinated. He continued to address me as an old but not a very perceptive friend of Deering's, and I felt like a wisp in his firm clasp.

From Deering's character he passed to the mentality of the artist in general; "mentality" was a word to which he returned rather often, and I think it must have been a new word in those days, for I have always associated it peculiarly with Mr. Bannock. He sketched some of the characteristics of the artist—"the artist as I see him," he said; he mentioned that possibly pride, "hard clean masculine pride," was his dominant quality. The lecture proceeded, Deering and I sat dumb before the speaker. Mr. Bannock had a gesture to match his phrase; he scooped the air with his broad palms, he sawed it with the edge of his hand, he riddled it with his outspread fingers. His arms were perpetually in movement from the shoulder; they withdrew to his side, they unfolded, length upon length, to ram home the strongest points of his discourse. It was the professional skill of his gesticulation, neither awkward nor yet spontaneous,

that presently gave me a clue to Mr. Bannock; or perhaps it was not only this, but something in his talk about "the artist—the artist who aims at a certain poignancy of beauty—a beauty that *stabs*"; anyhow I soon connected him with the stage, and I wondered how a large-faced young American, with a strange brassy accent in his speech, should find his occupation on the stage of Rome. Deering, when the coils of oratory happened to loosen for a moment, enlightened me.

Mr. Bannock, it appeared, sang at the opera; Deering said so, and Mr. Bannock gave a loud trumpet-snort of laughter at the words. "Sing? Come, Mr. Deering, tell your friend another!" The snort expressed derisive irony, I gathered. "I sing, oh I sing superbly—sometimes! You can come and hear me at the opera 'most any evening—now and then! I shall be singing there this very night—next year!" He was bitter, he was wounded by some thought in his mind; his elbow was on the table, his chin on his hand, a sneer upon the expanse of his face. I didn't clearly understand, but Deering seemed to have made a *gaffe*, and I felt awkward for half a minute. But it was all right; Mr. Bannock was exalted by a grievance of which Deering had reminded him. He rose to it with melancholy passion. I didn't like to question him, and for some time he was enigmatic, darkly ejaculating; but then he addressed himself directly to me. He said that I might like to hear a story—it chanced to be *his* story, but that didn't matter; it would interest me as the story of an artist, *any* artist in these days. He was engaged, he said, in an operatic company, here in Rome, which had bound itself by many solemn promises; he was to have the singing of several parts, small parts indeed, but

parts in which some people had thought him—well, satisfactory. He wouldn't have me rely on *his* word for it—he should like me to look at a paragraph or two that had appeared in the press at home; he produced an immense pocket-book and began to hand me papers, explaining that he didn't do so from conceit, but simply that I might see how matters stood. This company in Rome had engaged him, and it was a fact, account for it as I might, that the seven operas in which he was to have sung were never produced, were withdrawn whenever they were announced, though he had good reason to know that the public were asking for them. The company preferred to go forcing on the public a couple of ancient pieces, played invariably to an empty house; and why did they so prefer? He could tell me a story about *that*, and about the woman who squalled the chief part in the blamed old things. How often had he himself appeared in a month, did I suppose? Would I guess? Twice—in what happened to be the two poorest parts of his repertory. Well, he had told me the story for a curious illustration of the treatment of art in these places; as a friend of Mr. Deering's I was interested, for sure, in anything that touched the artist, and the artist, poor devil, is a man who *feels* when he is touched.

Yes, he feels—life cuts and hurts him; but then the leading strain in his character, you remember, is his pride. "Hard clean—" but Mr. Bannock bethought himself to vary the phrase this time; the pride of the man was now stark, stern, steel-true. His pride was becoming more and more alliterative when I happened to glance at Deering, who was silently occupied with a tiny glass of some vivid pink liquor. From the shape-

less face and cheap hat and dirty collar of Mr. Bannock I looked round at Deering beside me, and I received a singular shock. Deering bent over his pink potion with a languid air, cultivating his flower-frailty much as usual; but I saw him in a new light, and he appeared to me fresh and fine, wearing a peculiar wholesome difference in the clack and racket of the marble saloon. We were allies, after all; my sense of our partnership gushed suddenly warm behind my eyes. Didn't he make the aggrieved young barytone look dingy ?—and I turned back to Mr. Bannock with a perception quickened for an accent in his manner, for a tone in his sonority, which I began to observe more intelligently. I thought I saw that Mr. Bannock was a little shy of Deering, a little impressed, like me, by his freshness and fineness.

But another young man had sidled his way towards us through the close-ranked tables, and both my companions hailed him freely and drew him into our party. This was a quick-eyed youth, slender and shabby; he greeted us with a word or two jerked out of him briefly as he sat down, and then he saw that I was a stranger and bounced upon his feet to shake hands with me across the table. "Mr. Jaffrey," said Deering, introducing him, "but you may call him Jaff." I liked the look of Jaff —he seemed very simple and bashful. Deering summoned a waiter and gave an order; he treated Jaff as his own property, with a peremptory kindness that sat well on him. "You shall drink what I choose to give you," he said, meeting Jaff's expostulation. Jaff was English—as English as Peckham Rye; and I began to think he might be a poet, when Deering told me that he danced—danced at the "Eden" or the "Winter-

garden " or some such place, which I took to be a gaudy setting for a youth so gently coloured as this. He was exhausted, tired to death; he drank off the draught that Deering had prescribed, he sank back in his chair and sighed; and then he brightened up with a stammer of apology and leaned forward to take his part in our circle. Deering contemplated him pleasantly, and mentioned that a dancer's was a violent life. " I believe you," said the young man, with a sudden hard emphasis of disgust.

He then began to talk at a great rate; he poured out his tale in a flood, twitching his head, snapping his eyes at us all in turn. Peckham Rye sounded more and more clearly in his voice, which ran up in nervous squeaks as his story culminated; his broken and bungled phrases were extremely unlike Mr. Bannock's. Mr. Bannock, by the way, seemed also inclined to be indulgent and protective towards Jaff. " We all spoil him," Mr. Bannock remarked to me, patting Jaff on the shoulder. But Jaff didn't notice him particularly, or me either; as his story grew shriller and more urgent it was directed especially at Deering, with questions and appeals to him which Deering nodded a sympathetic reply to now and then. Rather a spoilt child, perhaps—but I liked the young dancer, and his story soon touched my own sympathy too. He was tired and hungry and discouraged under his eager friendliness; he seemed to have been strained too tight by a life of ill luck. And then, as he talked on, there appeared a sad little vein of ugliness in his candour; his eagerness was streaked with bits of cruelty and cunning which he looked too simple, too slight and light, to have imagined for himself. His story, I dare say, didn't greatly differ from the resentful Bannock's; it was all about the lying, cheating, swind-

ling, bullying which reigned in the high places of the "Olympia" or the "Trianon." But Jaff was not so much resentful as tired and bewildered; and he couldn't meet the assault of life with any massive conceit of himself, only with his poor little undigested fragments of bleak experience.

Were these two, I wondered, fair examples of the bright company which Deering had described? In that case it was less Roman and more Anglo-Saxon than I had supposed, but certainly they drew the eye to a background of life in Rome that was strange to me. The romance of Rome didn't count for much in the agitation of these two young aliens; they hadn't noticed that the city differed from another, except in the harshness of its behaviour to a stranger. Here at once, then, was a pair of settlers in Rome who trod the seven hills as though they were dust of the common world. Bannock and Jaff hadn't lived in books, and they might just as well have lived in Buffalo or Wolverhampton for any gold they breathed in the Roman air. In twenty minutes Deering had brought me a thousand miles from the Fountain of the Tortoises, quietly dribbling its poetic prattle in the shadow of ancient splendour. Life in the Via Nazionale had a harder edge to it, no doubt—and I saw in a moment that life in the Via Nazionale *was* the real thing, in a kind of a sense, for in truth it was much nearer to Rome of the Caesars than I had ever been before, in all my meditations by quiet fountains. Consider, imagine that you were suddenly dropped into the heart of imperial Rome, with a friend to conduct you, Horace or Martial, as Deering had conducted me—would you presently find yourself romancing among old ruins in the sunset? No, you would be sitting among a

crowd in a new-gilded saloon, your elbows on a marble-topped table, and it is more than likely you might be listening to a tale of grievance and indignation from a couple of alien mountebanks, lately arrived in Rome and already wishing themselves back in their own Iberia or Pannonia. Taken in this way by an intelligent imagination, Via Nazionale would prove a profounder romance than the Palatine Hill at shut of an April evening.

There I was, you see, back again in my literary yearnings! It seemed impossible for me to take life plainly; I *had* to dress it up somehow in romantic rags. I could feel the needle-point of Deering's irony, if I should tell him what I was already making of our session under the painted mirror. "Can't you *live*—isn't life enough for you?"—he would blandly smile the question at me, fingering the tiny slender cigarette that he lit after swallowing his potion. I didn't tell him, so I hadn't to meet the question; but I really might have asked, if it came to that, whether Bannock and Jaff, taken plainly, furnished life enough for *him*. Of course they were only an instalment—we should see more in good time. But meanwhile they abounded, the two of them, in their exceedingly diverse styles; they appeared intent on providing our friend (me they had quite forgotten) with as much of the material of their distresses as they could squeeze into the hour. They got considerably in each other's way; each wanted the ear of Deering to himself, but I noticed that Mr. Bannock, for all the power of his winding coils, had by no means the best of it with Jaff's more nimble and headlong dash. Jaff, moreover, was favoured by Deering

and the pat of Mr. Bannock's hand on Jaff's shoulder grew sharp and impatient. "Yes, yes, my dear man," he said, "we all have our little troubles—but I want to lay a case before you, Mr. Deering, and I don't want you should necessurrily think of it as *mine*, though mine it be. I take the larger ground, and I ask you, Mr. Deering, to follow me in proclaiming to God's firmament that the tragedy of the artist, poor devil, is a tragedy of five lawng——"

Indeed, indeed Mr. Bannock was impressed by Deering; he admired my Deering's fine white hand and expensive black suit. He *courted* Deering—I could see it in the bend of his attention, I could hear it in the respectful catch of his voice, when he listened and replied to some interpolation of Deering's in the midst of the long long tragedy. "Allow me to say, Mr. Deering, that that is an exceedingly true observation." And as for Deering himself, though he found the style of the young barytone oppressive, he was evidently drawing a trifle of satisfaction from his homage. And more and more I was impressed myself by the charm of Deering's graceful and well-appointed superiority over his companions, over the scuffles and squabbles out of which the poor young mountebanks appealed to him. I began to measure the distance between the stage of the Trianon—where Jaff had been prancing through long hours of rehearsal, so I gathered, bawled at all the time by "that old beast Levissohn"—between Jaff's Trianon and the Botticelli picture in which Deering lived aloof. Bannock and Jaff, they were attracted to the elegant leisure of the picture, and no wonder. There weren't many Botticellis in *their* world; it was to their credit

that they made the most of one when they had the chance. And Deering, though the dancer was shrill and the singer ponderous, did most evidently appreciate their act of homage.

I was caught by a word of Jaff's (he had managed to burst into the long tragedy of the artist), something he said about expecting presently to see "Edna—my sweetheart, you know." He threw it out carelessly, and I was struck by the casual felicity of his calling Edna his "sweetheart"—pleasing old word! Edna was to join us immediately; she had been detained at the Trianon (where she performed with Jaff) by "poor Madam Dowdeswell," who had been having a rare scrap with Levissohn, the beast. Edna would turn up in a minute, and I was picturing Jaff's sweetheart becomingly when he spoilt the effect of the word by using it again—he said that Levissohn had got a new sweetheart now, a fool of a Russian girl, and the prettiness went out of the word as I perceived that it was technical, prescriptive, not a chance flourish. Too sugared in its archaism for the cultured, it lived vulgarly in the speech of Jaff and his circle—I noticed the oddity and disliked it. But I looked with interest on Edna when she did presently appear, slipping through the crowded room towards us like a lithe little fish. Jaff gathered her in and handed her to our table with agreeable authority; they made an appealing pair together, so childish and so English, and I could have wished to snatch them up and carry them off, away from Madam Dowdeswell and Levissohn, if I had known at all where else to put them. Edna was small and restless, a scrap of bright quicksilver; she slid into the talk of our table with a shimmer of playfulness, infantile nonsense and cajolery that refreshed us; her

thin cockney freedom danced over us all. She scrambled on to the plush seat by Deering and flung an arm confidentially round his neck.

I never saw Jaff and Edna perform their turn at the Trianon, indeed I never saw them again; I don't know what became of them or whether they managed to get what I soon found they ardently desired. They disappeared into the void, so far as I was concerned, and all I can do for them is to breathe a far-away blessing on their pretty young heads—young no longer now, wherever they are. Their ambition at that time, as I soon discovered when Edna began to talk seriously to Deering, was by hook or by crook to reach America; they were going to have such brilliant times, such dashing successes, if once they could get clear away from this old rotten Europe. "Darling sweeting Deering," said Edna—she crooned, and this was when she began to be really serious, mellifluously in Deering's ear; "you *do* love us, don't you?" She coaxed, she blandished him discreetly; and even as she piped her childishness in her weak cockney vowel-tones she looked forlorn and wan after all, a child over-tired and not far from tears. Poor thin-armed Edna, she knew what she wanted and she wasted no time over laments and grievances. "Deering dear," she said, "*if* you love us, I'll tell you a secret—you're a duck, and I've always said so." Deering gleamed at her sarcastically, and she shot out a lively grimace, an imitation of his look, with a good deal of humour. "And so, ducky Deering, *as* you love us, I'll tell you another." But she didn't—she dropped suddenly grave and wistful, and sat silent. I remember that quick shine of gravity through her play, and I hope more than ever that she and Jaff have found their

fortune, wherever it may have awaited them, and enjoyed it.

Nobody else came to join us; but these three were enough to give me a picture that abides with me, a picture in which Rome becomes a place of less account than Wolverhampton, and a picture in which our good Deering becomes, so strangely, a personage of weight and worth, a pillar of the world. For you see what he stood for, what he was turned into, when he entered his new Bohemia of the Via Nazionale, the unromantic Bohemia which may remind me of imperial Rome, but certainly not of the Rome of poor dear Hawthorne. Deering, seated between Bannock and Jaff, fluttered over by pretty Edna, was changed into a man of substance, a man to whom the struggling Bohemian stretched an appealing hand; for Deering had his own firm ground above them—and he might step down into their midst on a fine afternoon, but he could always get back again, if he would, for a comfortable evening out of reach of the mountebanks. Did I see them drawn by the charm of his elegance, the grace of his fair hand as he toyed with his rose-tipped cigarette? Oh they felt it, no doubt, but they felt it for the mark of his security in the great free expensive world; if Deering could trifle so daintily with his pleasure it was because he commanded such resources—such a power of connexions, of ramifying alliances, and of sound money too, mark you, as like as not. I thought I understood very well. Not every day did Bannock or Jaff or Edna meet with a Deering, school and college style, Cambridge and Oxford bred, the real right thing—not every day, at least in the wilderness of Rome, and never and nowhere at all, perhaps, a Deeirng so indulgent and a Deering of

that exquisite insight into the mentality of the artist. Coax him and court him then, by all means—I don't blame you.

Edna's way was much the best, but of course she had the unfair privileges of her sex. It wasn't only that she could pat him on the head (most discreetly, I must say) even among all those painted mirrors; but she could gush at him with her nonsense instead of orating or lamenting, and then she could drop suddenly silent and wan, lonely as a child in that chattering crowd. This last effect, it is true, was uncalculated; she didn't invent her swift and pallid subsidence, poor Edna, or thoughtfully make use of it; but it was a part of her feminine privilege, none the less, for of the trio of mountebanks Edna, being a woman, was by far the oldest, and this last effect was the sign of her age. She looked like a child—but Bannock and Jaff, beside her, *were* children, tretful and bewildered and inexperienced; Edna was a hundred years old in comparison, and her weariness was that of a grown-up human being, far beyond the petulant fierce resentments of a child. She was a woman, she had the privilege of maturity in her power to taste the flatness and dreariness of the scuffle, while the men went on nagging and beating their heads against its injustice. And so, though her way seemed roundabout, she reached the point long before they did; with the echo of her nonsense still in the air she had caught Deering into an earnest discussion, subdued to an undertone which warned off the rest of us, and I could hear her explaining and developing her scheme, laying it before Deering in quick nervous phrases while she absently fingered the objects on the table. That was Edna's way —and I don't know at all what her scheme was or how

she intended that Deering should help her, but I think she achieved her purpose.

Jaff meanwhile was babbling to Bannock about the glory of America, or rather he was asking a great many questions about it and never leaving Bannock the time to unroll his answers. The barytone was properly ready to exalt his country if he were given the chance, and I noticed that the big pocket-book was again in his hand. But he was placed in a difficulty; for the pocket-book showed how America honours the artist —I caught a few words as he opened it, "By God, that country loves a Man, but she *worships* an Artist"— and yet he was not as eager as you might have expected to return home for her delight. The young singer, he had no plan of going back again; instead he had a very clear-cut design of conquest on the stage of Europe, a design of which he managed to expose the opening section (it took us in a bound as far as Cracow, I remember); and Jaff's urgent desire to be fed with the report of Buffalo, her sympathy and bounty, did a little embarrass the home-raised artist of that place. But Jaff was enthusiastic enough for two, for twenty; he spun to and fro in his imagination while Bannock was finding the first of his clippings; and for my part I sat and watched them, entirely forgotten by the whole party, and felt like the lady in Comus, considerably out of it.

The silver chirrup of Edna's laughter rang forth again at last, her grave-eyed colloquy was at an end. She slipped from her place on the sofa, seized Jaff and plucked him out of our circle, kissed her hand to us all and danced him off through the crowd—and that was the last I saw of the mercurial pair. Good luck to them, I say; and I don't withhold my blessing from the

solemn Bannock, who now evidently intended to settle down firmly to *his* grave talk with Deering, the distraction of the other young people having cleared out of his way. He would have preferred that I too should take my departure; but Deering held me back when I rose, and we sat on together, the three of us, for a very long hour. I relieved the time with more pink potions, while Bannock circled the globe through the stages of his campaign. I was numb and dumb as before; but Deering held out bravely, wagging his head with judicial comment as the story marched over kingdom and continent. One point alone I noted, one conclusion I drew; whatever it cost him, Deering occupied a position in the Via Nazionale to which he was not indifferent. He owed it to everything that he supposed himself to have shed and cast away, finally, when he put on his broad-brimmed hat and eschewed the English ghetto; he owed his position to his value (poor Deering!) as a substantial and respectable Briton. But why dwell on a painful subject? Deering had been welcomed into a society that included an opera-singer and two dancers, he was at home and on his feet there; and which of the respectable Britons at that moment strolling on the Pincio, glaring at each other and listening to the band, could imaginably say the same?

WHEN AT LENGTH WE TORE OURSELVES from the embraces of Bannock, on the pavement by the tram-line, the dusk of the warm day was falling —it was nearly dinner-time. I had no wish to leave my hold of Deering, having once secured him; he would surely now take me, I suggested, to dine in some clever place where I could pursue my research and discover still more of the world. Yes, he would; and he mused a little space, debating on what new aspect of reality my eyes should next be opened. On the whole he elected for the Vatican—so he strangely said; and he explained what he meant as we descended the street, rounded its sharp twist, and struck into the shabby expanse of the Piazza di Venezia. (The great sugar-cake of the Monument of Italy, which has now smartened the piazza to the taste of Domitian and Caracalla, hadn't in those days begun to appear; it still lurked low behind a tier of dingy hoarding.) We were to dine, said Deering, at an eating-house near the Vatican—not geographically near, but under its spiritual shadow; and by this he signified that the company which it kept was papal, very black and papal indeed—he was all for varying my experience to the utmost. What a command of variety he possessed! He could lead me from the Trianon to the Vatican in ten minutes—as free of the one as of the other, no doubt; and he smiled naughtily as he admitted that his love of observation took him into many queer places.

The Vatican, I urged, was the queerest place in the world—for *him*; not that indeed I thought so in my own mind, but I knew it would please him to think so in his. I easily saw my Deering, in fact, as a frequenter of the

" black," demurely flirting with papistry, breathing the perfume of that distinction, that fine-bred aloofness which it wears with such an air. From some wonderful old saloon of the Farnese palace or the Cancelleria (how did I know about them ?—from Zola, of course), with its beautiful faded hangings, with the high-backed papal throne turned to the wall under its canopy, you may look down upon the jostle of the vulgar as from nowhere else; and the most exquisite edge of your disdain will fall (Deering would particularly appreciate this) on the tourist, the hot-faced British matron, the long-toothed British spinster, bustling or trailing around in their dowdy protestantism. Obviously the very place for Deering, it seemed to me; but I quite understood that I was to be surprised and amused at finding him associated with ecclesiasticism of any sort, on any terms, even in a quaint old cook-house like that to which he had presently guided me. While we proceeded thither I delivered a sally or two on the subject of his horrible perversity—that *he* of all people should have friends in the camp of the obscurantist! To have abandoned the fallen day of the Gioconda's dream (or was it her cave ?) for an American bar—that was all very well, and I had seen his point. But for Deering, the enlightened and illuminated, to be hobnobbing with priestcraft, cultivating *that* sensation—I threw up my hands in mirth and horror. Deering was thoroughly pleased.

Our cook-shop was close to the palace of the Cancelleria, and the solemnity of the vast pile hung above us in the dusk as we lingered for a minute in the square. It discouraged my raillery; one can hardly take a line of levity over the Romish persuasion in the presence of a

Roman palace. The eyes of its huge face are set in a stare of grandeur, of pride, of massive obstinacy, quite unaware of the tittering insect at its feet. If a grey-haired cardinal ever looks out of one of those windows, holding aside the thread-bare folds of the damask—as he may, for all I know—he looks without disdain upon the pair of tourists, standing below, who find the page in their red handbooks and read the description of the palace aloud to each other. He looks without disdain, because utterly without comprehension; he has never so much as heard of these alien sectarians, uninvited pilgrims from the world of outer barbarism. That is my impression, and I scanned the rows and rows of the Chancery windows in the hope of discovering some worn ascetic old countenance at one of them; I should like to see a cardinal lean out to enjoy a breath of evening air after the long studies of the day. But Deering laughed at my admirable innocence—again!—and assured me that I should see no cardinals here; they lived mostly in cheap lodgings near the railway-station, and spent the day in poring over the share-list of the morning paper. He didn't really know, I retorted; he gave me the answer that he considered good for me. "Wait then," he said, "till you meet with a cardinal outside the pages of a book"—but I never did, nor possibly Deering either.

"Ah," cried Deering suddenly, "Cooksey will tell you—Cooksey calls all the cardinals by their Christian names." We were just approaching the low door of the Trattoria dell' Oca, and a stout little man in a loud suit was entering there in front of us. "Cooksey my dear, wait for your friends," cried Deering; and the little man faced round and greeted him with a pleasant

chuckle. Cooksey was red and genial; in his bright check suit and his Panama hat he looked like the English globe-trotter of tradition—I was instantly reminded of Mr. Meagles among the Allongers and Marshongers. I can't imagine any one more calculated, I should have said, to send Deering shuddering and faint in the opposite direction; but Deering smiled on him with all his sweetness, and we passed together into the dark entry of the Goose. A plain but distinguished Roman lady, heavily moustached, sat at a high desk inside; she bowed graciously and called a sharp word to a chinless man, evidently her husband, who dashed forth to make us welcome. Cooksey and Deering were familiar customers, and we were handed to a table in an inner room, close to the mouth of a small black recess—a cupboard containing a little old dwarf-woman, like a witch, who was stirring a copper sauce-pan on a stove, for the cupboard was the kitchen. It was a much nicer place than the gilded hall of the Via Nazionale, and an excellent meal, though slippery, was produced for us from the cupboard. As for the wine, it came from the chinless man's own vineyard at Velletri—a rose-golden wine, a honey-sweet name.

Now for Cooksey. Deering tackled him at once on the question of the cardinals, with malicious intention; and Cooksey shook his head, chuckling, and remarked that they were a low lot, no doubt, take them for all in all. "A poor degenerate lot," he declared—"the college has gone to pieces very badly. All exemplary lives, they tell me—and not one of them would poison a fly, let alone a guest at his own table." Cooksey had jumped to our humour very pleasantly; he twinkled and assured me that he longed, as Deering did and I must too, to

hear of scandals and dark secrets upon the backstairs of the Vatican. "But all I ever find there," he said, "is a pail of slops—I tumbled over one this morning." "You were on duty, were you?" asked Deering. Cooksey said yes, and he went on to explain to me ("lest you should misconceive my position") that it wasn't his duty to empty the slops. "That's the duty of Monsignor Mair, and I told him so, and he answered me back very saucily indeed. I had to pursue him with a mop." Cooksey, I learned, held an office of some kind in the papal court—"unpaid, lavishly unpaid"—which kept him in Rome for a term of months each year. "And it's still seven weeks to the holidays," he said, "and I've spent all my tin, and I daren't ask the Holy Father to lend me any, because the last time I did so he said he'd write home and tell my people I was getting into extravagant ways." Cooksey was delightfully gay; he assumed the humour of a school-boy and it became him well, with his red face and his jolly rotundity.

He ran along in the same strain, playing his irreverent cheer over the occupation of his day. Nothing had gone right with him, he said, since the morning; it wasn't only the slop-pail, it had been one of his unlucky days from the start. "First of all I was late for early school," he said; "I dashed round to church before breakfast (I always think of it as early school), and I was three minutes late, and I fell with a crash on the butter-slide which Father Jenkins had made in the middle of the nave. That's his little way—he thinks it funny; he reckons always to catch somebody who comes running in at the last moment, and he scored heavily this morning—I hurt myself horribly. And then I couldn't attend to my book because I was attacked by a flea, and

just as I was cracking it on the altar-step I found I had forgotten to button my braces; and while I was attending to that I jabbed my stick in the face of a savage old woman who was kneeling behind me; she gave me such a look—and the other fellows told me afterwards I must go and apologize to her, because it seems she's a very special pet convert of Father Jenkins's and would be sure to complain to him if she was assaulted in church—that was the way they put it. However I was comforted by one thing; just as I was leaving I heard a great bump on the floor, and Father Jenkins had tumbled on his own slide, the old silly, while he was rushing out to rag the sacristan about something; and he sat there cursing and swearing (*inwardly*, I will say for him), and I wanted to make a long nose at him, but I was afraid it might be forbidden in church, like spitting—not that the reverend fathers can say much about *that*!—" Dear me, Cooksey *was* volatile; he ran on more and more jovially, gathering impetus as he talked.

I wished I could have questioned Deering about him—he seemed such an odd product of the Vatican. The papal functionary was a middle-aged man; he enjoyed his dinner with much emphasis, hailing the chinless man from time to time (in fluent Italian idiom, but with a British accent that caused Deering to glance round uneasily at the other tables)—summoning the chinless man, Amerigo by name, for a word and a jest, peering into the cupboard to banter the little witch-woman with the freedom of an old admirer. " They know me, bless their hearts," he remarked to me; " they rob me as they all rob us all, and they know I know it and we're the best of friends. They're all thieves together, these Romans—I tell 'em so, and they like it. Now watch—"

He called to Amerigo with an air of indignation and began to accuse him—I forget how it was, but it appeared that Amerigo was in the habit of grossly overcharging him in some particular, and Cooksey was determined he would bear it no longer, so he said, striking his knife-handle on the table defiantly; and Amerigo spread his hands in voluble self-defence, earnestly contesting the charge, and Cooksey held up his fist and retorted again, and they argued the point—till Amerigo suddenly smiled across his anxious face, darting a look at me as he did so, and Cooksey lunged at him playfully in the stomach and clapped him on the shoulder. There was a burst of laughter, in which Amerigo joined industriously, complaisantly, looking again at me. Perhaps I misunderstood him, but he seemed to regard me as the audience for whom the scene had been played. He had an eye in his head.

Dismissing Amerigo, Cooksey began to examine me on my business in Rome, and I was soon able to turn his enquiries upon himself. I found that he had frequented Rome for many years, a dozen or more—" ever since a certain event took place for me," he said; and he paused, waiting for me to ask what the event had been. He waited so explicitly that I felt no delicacy; I put the question. " Oh, the *event*," he said; " the event was simply that I happened to become a Catholic." He was grave for an instant, apparently implying that my question was not in the best of taste; but he overlooked it and passed on. He offered to do me the honours of Rome, the kind of Rome I probably hadn't discovered for myself; and I nearly exclaimed that Deering was doing exactly that for me at the moment—Cooksey was the kind of Rome, or one of the kinds, that had been

hidden from me till to-day. But all I said was something suitably grateful, and he announced that he should take me in hand. "You'll find I keep very low company," he observed, "monks and Jesuits and such. My respectable English friends refuse to meet me when they come to Rome. They think it disreputable of me to know so many priests. But if you're not afraid I'll show you a few; rum old devils they are, some of them —it's all right, I call them so to their faces. We're none of us shy of a little plain speaking; you should hear Cardinal ——" the name of the plain-spoken cardinal escapes me; but Cooksey had plenty to say of him, dwelling with relish on the liberal speech of his eminence. Then he slanted off into anecdotes, stories and scenes of clerical life, in a funny little vein of frivolity and profanity that seemed by several sizes too small for him, so stout and red and comfortable as he sat there. He absorbed his dinner with a loud smacking satisfaction, and he told stories of which the roguery consisted in talking very familiarly of saints, of miracles, of the furniture of churches. "But I shock you," he remarked to me at length, enquiringly.

Did Cooksey shock me? Oh yes, he was sure of it, and he explained why he was sure. "We all strike you as profane," said he; his "we" stood for those of his persuasion, that which I think of as the "Romish." He himself, he said, would have been frightened to death by such talk in old days; he had been taught (like me, no doubt) that it was "beastly bad form" to be simple and jolly in these matters. "We aren't solemn, I confess," he proceeded; "we're cheerful because we aren't nervous, and we aren't nervous because we happen to feel pretty sure of our ground. Now in old days I was

as solemn as eight archbishops." But he pulled himself up. "I apologize, I apologize (the second time to-day! —but you'll be kinder than that old cat of Father J.'s). I'll try to behave with proper decorum—a great fat rascal like me! You wouldn't think I was born in the diocese of Bath and Wells. When I go back there now I feel like a naughty boy in a sailor suit; I *can't* remember that I'm a damnable heretic whom the dean and chapter ought to burn out of hand." So Cooksey settled that he was shocking, and the thought seemed to make him more comfortable and expansive than ever. But with some notion of attesting my own liberalism I then ventured on an anecdote myself, a tale of a man who had prayed to a miracle-working image, somewhere in Rome, and had been embarrassed by the shower of wonders that had thereafter befallen him. It is quite a good story, the point being that each of the miracles wrought was slightly off the mark, not exactly what the man had asked for, and the humour appearing in the detail of the saint's misapprehension—he means so well, his mistakes are all so natural. I told it brightly and candidly.

"Ah well," said Cooksey, and he didn't laugh. I was so frankly surprised that my jaw dropped, as people say; I blushed hotly—there yawned between us a pause. "On that subject," said Cooksey, "I'm afraid we must agree to differ. I happen to hold another view of the force of devotion." He stared with fixed eyes, munching slowly. I never was more taken aback, and I was young enough to feel a burning shame of my blunder. It seemed so awkward, so gawky of me to have offended in that way; a civilized human being doesn't jar the harmony of a circle in an amusing old eating-

house by the Cancelleria—he is sensitive to the tone of the place. So Cooksey had it all his own way, and I sank in shame. He didn't let me off, not a tittle; he heavily maintained his stare and his silence. It spoilt the rest of the evening for me, it soured the wine of Velletri; though Cooksey, when he had deliberately finished his gesture of disapproval, agreed to pretend that nothing had happened, changed the subject and talked about the excavations on the Palatine. Before long he was merrily continuing the story of his day, part of which he had spent with a German archeologist in the House of Augustus; he told us how his ill-luck had pursued him still, how he had accidentally sat on the camera of the German and reduced it to powder; he ignored the black hole I had made in the talk and turned his back on it. But there it was, and I couldn't forget it; my clumsiness fretted me.

Cooksey had it all his own way at the time, but I reacted afterwards and I didn't fail to perceive that he had treated me unfairly. I was hot with indignation, and it was long before I felt any kindness in return for not a little on his part towards me. He was friendly, he was helpful; it was assumed that we " agreed to differ " upon certain subjects, and on that footing he gave me his protection. And I am sure I don't now grudge him the fun of his severity when I tried in my presumption, that first evening, to take a hand in his game. It was *his* game, and I couldn't expect him to admit an outsider like me; it was mine to look on, a home-bred novice, and be a trifle fluttered and shocked. Deering, I observed, was highly amused at my discomfiture; he sat a little apart, looking pale and penetrating by contrast with Cooksey's red breadth and weight, and he

watched us with a charming sneer that was lost upon Cooksey, not upon me. He enjoyed the sight of my indoctrination, my collision with this new little bit of the world of Rome. If he couldn't show me a cardinal he could produce an associate of cardinals—or at any rate a man who had chased Monsignor Mair with a mop on the backstairs of the Vatican, which was surely as good. Already I had the means of correcting my fancy about the palace of the Cancelleria—another illusion dispelled! Ascetic faces, solitary study, proud aloofness indeed! Cooksey's pranks and rogueries told a different story; the guarded fortress of distinction that I had imagined—I had now an inkling of its tone, in Deering's opinion.

I don't know about that; but Cooksey was undoubtedly a queer novel case for my attention. He was showing off, it was clear; he was flourishing his levity at an outsider; and his unexpected slap at my intrusion, when you think of it, was extremely enlightening. He did so enjoy, you see, his place as a member of the ring, inside the fortress; years had not withered the freshness of it, had not staled the complacency of his position. "Look at me, look," he seemed to say, like a child who has climbed a tree and balances on a branch; and then "look again," like a man walking familiarly on the terrace of a great grand house, while a party of sight-seers are marshalled by the butler. "See how easily we carry our high estate—don't you wish you were one of us, sharing the fun?" And then, if you venture to presume, "Ah, *would* you? No you don't—take *that*!" If you ever were the guest of the grand house and happened to be pacing the terrace, carelessly, while the public were shuffling through the state apartments and

looking out of the windows, you would sympathize completely with the mind of Cooksey. I can imagine the sensation—who has not admired the nonchalant figure upon the terrace, the creature of privilege at whom the public gaze from afar ? See him stroll at his ease, pause carelessly, call and wave lightly to a companion under the sacred trees. Ah it is good to let the uninitiate see how free one is, how playfully at home in the sanctuary of their envy—for one can't doubt that they do feel envy and are quick to be conscious of their exclusion. Sweet, to be sure, are the uses of parade, sweet and fresh after many a year.

One can't have the public, however, stepping into the enclosure and blundering into the fun of the talk ; one draws back coolly if they begin to take a liberty; and that too is a movement and a gesture enjoyable in its quiet dignity. Cooksey, at the moment when he was delivering his rebuke to me, was intensely dignified; I clearly remember the calm decency with which he set me down. " On *that* subject we must agree to differ "; it was as though I had dealt him an ugly blow, but he could make allowances for my want of the finer feelings. At the same time it was more than a personal matter, and he couldn't let me off my punishment; so he gravely stared and allowed the lesson to sink home. It was all the heavier for the contrast of his disapproval with the gay rattle of his ordinary style. Cooksey, I had to admit, was much nearer the heart of Rome than either Deering or I. He had arrived from as far afield as we; but he had not only detached himself from Bath and Wells, he had become a responsible member of the Roman state and had the right of chastising us in its name. All the majesty of Rome was at his back—

majesty I say advisedly, for you don't look for anything majestic in modern Rome, you didn't in those days at any rate, save in the historical shadow of the Vatican. Cooksey was himself explicit upon this point He happened to make some allusion to the vulgar new gingerbread (so he described it) of the upstart Italian monarchy, the coarse intruder whom the Vatican was coldly staring down in its ancient pride. Cooksey, needless to say, was whole-heartedly on the side of the noble and patient old sufferer against the upstart and the bully; and indeed as he put the matter the Vatican seemed the only fit place for a gentleman of feeling. The moral support behind him was immense, and his flippant style was accordingly the more suggestive. Where would be the charm, where the consequence, of a jest about slop-pails and butter-slides, if they belonged to the household of the upstart ? But in the midst of the immemorial state of the other place it is very amusing, no doubt, to find them in their homely incongruity, or to say you have found.

So Cooksey was really the first person I had ever come across who had a foothold, as it struck me, square and firm upon the soil of Rome, in spite of his loud orange boots and his globe-trotting check suit. If I had a doubt at all upon the subject it was due to something else—to his absurd little passage with Amerigo, wherein I felt sure that Amerigo had been humouring and playing down to him, with the dexterity of much practice. Cooksey, no, was not in a position to meet the chinless master of the Goose on equal terms; he had much to learn, like the rest of us, before he could presume to treat the guileful Roman as a plaything. But in the shelter of the Vatican he was securely entrenched, at any

rate on the backstairs. I didn't clearly understand his position there, I judge it was a modest one; but at least he had a real job of work to be done, which "kept him in Rome," as he said, and which gave him a hold upon the city of enchantment. "Yes, I know Rome well enough," said Cooksey, as we prepared to depart at the end of our meal; "I can say I know something of Rome, and of the Romans too." He bowed gallantly to the lady at the desk, and she looked down on him with her brilliant eyes like a good shrewd aunt upon a rather uproarious schoolboy.

COOKSEY WAS HELPFUL, EVEN MORE helpful than I desired; he carried me on a round of church-visiting, the very next afternoon, and showed me a number of delicious old nooks and corners which I had already discovered for myself. In peregrinations of that kind he could teach me little; I could moon and roam and quote my red handbook with the best. I was still considerably annoyed with him and not much inclined to accept him as my guide, so long as he only guided me back again to my familiar haunts. I had some difficulty in allowing him to believe that he was befriending me with his superior knowledge; but indeed he scarcely waited for my consent—he instructed me, as we made our round, without noticing the tact of my compliance. No matter for that afternoon, however, which brought me no new picture of Roman life; it was on an early morning a day or two later that Cooksey presented me with an impression for which I was grateful, at least I hope so.

I ought to have been grateful; for without the help of Cooksey I shouldn't have had occasion to set forth from my lodging, very early in the day, clad as though for a dinner-party at eight in the morning. Rakish and raffish it seemed to be stepping across the Piazza di Spagna, in that April freshness, wearing a swallow-tail coat and a polished shirt-front, like a belated reveller of last evening; I shrank from observation, my clothes of state looked jaded and green in the sweet air. But in Rome this morning appearance of a strayed roysterer is not misunderstood; the cabman whom I hailed knew whither I was bound, and he rattled me off through the empty streets in the direction of the Tiber and the

Bridge of St. Angelo. We crossed the river, and presently we were cantering over the vaſt open space of the Square of St. Peter, between the showering fountains. Hundreds and hundreds of people were scattered over the square, converging upon the slope which ascends to the ſteps of the church; and there I joined the throng and pushed forward in its company beneath the leather curtain of the portal—a pilgrim, one of I don't know how many thousands, gathered from the ends of the earth and now assembling in the morning to receive an auguſt benediction.

The great floor of the church was open to all the world; the crowd spread over it and was gradually packed to density under the dome, a mass that ſteadily grew as the ſtream of concourse poured and poured through the doorways and along the nave. It was a crowd of many languages and of all conditions, and an immense hum of excitement surged from it, breaking readily into applause and acclamation—though there were hours to wait before the climax should be reached and expectation crowned. It was a grand event, I suppose, but not of the grandeſt; it was a reception of some few thousands of votaries, for whom the basilica was this morning the chamber of audience. How many thousands will the chamber hold? It had filled to overflowing before the morning had passed, and the hum as it deepened grew fervid and passionate with the loyalty of a ſtrangely mingled army. These people had been drawn to Rome from afar like the reſt of us, like myself, like Deering and Cooksey; but the voice of their enthusiasm had a profounder note than ours. I picked my way among the assembling tribes, liſtening to snatches of their talk and trying to identify the outland-

ish forms of their gabble. My place, however, was not in their midst; for by the kindness of Cooksey I had admission to some special enclosure or tribune, lifted above the heads of the mob; and that is why I was dressed for a party at this untimely hour—it is the rule.

I found my place of honour on a kind of scaffold, raised in the choir at a point that commanded the splendid scene. The pilgrims thronged and thickened just beneath us; but they seemed far away in their murmurous confusion when I had taken my seat on the scaffold, among the black-arrayed group already established there aloft. We were a dozen or so, men and women; we looked not at all like pilgrims, and instead of joining in the jubilant roar that soon began to sway to and fro in the thousands of throats beneath us—instead of crying aloud in our homage before the shrine of Rome—what could we do but look on as at a spectacle, a display which we had luckily chanced upon and overtaken in time? We had nothing to do with it, no share in that rising passion of fidelity;—or perhaps indeed I should speak for myself alone, for my neighbour on the scaffold had presently attracted my attention by a sudden movement, springing to her feet (she was a middle-aged woman), throwing up her hands and cheering—cheering with a strange uncertain bird-like note that shockingly embarrassed the rest of us. She had been carried away by a sympathetic enthusiasm and she wanted to join in the full-throated roar; but she was detached from it, isolated in a little ring of decorous silence; so that her queer *hoo-hoo-hoo* fell upon her own ears too with disconcerting effect, and she faltered rather lamentably in the middle of her outcry. Discreet ladies, black-veiled as they all were, sitting around her

on the scaffold, looked rigidly in front of them; and the poor enthusiast subsided as best she could, blushing and effacing herself. That was our only demonstration; the company of the scaffold sat otherwise unmoved to the end of the great affair, talking unobtrusively under that vast dome-full of human sound.

There was a long while to wait before the august and magnificent entry which we were expecting. Cooksey appeared very soon, and with him was a neat and slender and priestly figure to which I instantly gave the name of Father Holt. You remember the figure, of course, in Thackeray's gallery—the polished and enigmatic gentleman of the world, who wrought so vividly upon the boyhood of Esmond. If Cooksey's friend had chanced to take me in hand when *I* was a boy, he would indeed have found me easy moulding. He was dark, he was very handsome in the clear-eyed and hard-lipped manner; he had the ghost of a smile and a most musical voice. Cooksey came bustling to the front of the platform, where I was, and Father Holt dropped behind. One of the black-veiled ladies put out a hand to him and he dealt with it urbanely; but he disengaged himself, he held himself aloof in the background; and indeed we were not a party of much distinction, and I didn't wonder that Father Holt found us a little plebeian. Cooksey breathed heavily in my ear to the effect that the female just behind me was the old wretch of whom he had spoken the other evening, the pet votaress of Father Jenkins—" and I know I shall put my foot in it again," he said, " because I always make a fool of myself on these solemn occasions." He chuckled wickedly, and he added that " these old cats " took it all so seriously, one had to be desperately careful.

The elderly gentlewoman in question was taking it very seriously indeed, though she didn't commit herself to the point of standing up and cheering. She had forgiven Cooksey his assault upon her in church, and she now drew him into a conversation that I followed with interest. I can't reproduce it, for it was highly technical, full of odd phrases and allusions that were strange to me; Cooksey and Lady Mullinger (that was her name) conversed in the language of a secret society from which I was excluded. It struck me as very picturesque, and it exhaled a cloud of suggestion—"puff on puff," not exactly of "grated orris-root," but of a pleasant and pungent effluence that reminded me of many things. This vein of Roman talk never seems to me to have any of the associations of an ancient history, of a long-seasoned tradition, of a bygone grace denied to those who are not of the society. Oh no, it is intensely modern and angular; it reminds me of raw new buildings, filled with chalk-blue and shrimp-pink imagery; it reminds me of deal praying-chairs and paper roses and inscriptions in ugly French lettering. When Cooksey and Lady Mullinger talk together they appear to delight in emphasizing their detachment, their disconnexion from all the sun-mellowed time-hallowed sweetness of antiquity; but of course it is exactly this odd modernity of their tone which makes their talk so picturesque in the hearing of an outsider. I was a complete outsider; and the manner in which these two spoke of the rites and forms and festivals of their society was a manner quite fresh to me, and I enjoyed it.

Lady Mullinger was elderly and plain. Catching sight of Father Holt, she made him signals so urgent that he had to come forward; she beset him with smiles

and gestures and enquiries under which he stood patient and courteous, a picture of well-bred disdain. Lady Mullinger had no misgiving, and she rallied him archly, she appealed to him, she bunched her untidy amplitude together to make room for him at her side. He looked at her sidelong with his bright eyes, and he took no notice of her advances beyond answering her large sloppy questions with a neatly worded phrase. She made the foolish mistake of coupling Father Holt and Cooksey together in her broadly beaming patronage; Cooksey was well aware that it was a mistake, and his assurance failed him. Father Holt (I can't call him anything else) glanced from one to the other with a single flit of his cool observation, and it was enough. Cooksey was ill at ease; he had been gossiping quite comfortably with her ladyship, but with Father Holt's quiet glance on him he tried to disown her. He saw that she was stout and ordinary, and that he himself looked terribly like her; he edged away and did his best to range himself on Father Holt's side of the colloquy. But Father Holt kept them serenely at a distance, the pair of them; it was easy to see that it was not for Cooksey to stand by his side uninvited.

"No, Lady Mullinger," said Father Holt, "I can't, I fear, make you a definite promise in that matter." He spoke with a charming vibrating bell-tone; it was like the striking of a rod of polished silver in the midst of the sawing of strings out of tune. Lady Mullinger, unsuspecting and unabashed, flung herself the more vehemently into her demand; she wanted him to do this and that, but mainly she wanted him to come to tea with her on Thursday and to have a little talk with "poor Charlotte"; she pressed it as an opportunity for

poor Charlotte which he mustn't deny her. Poor Charlotte was in a sad way; nothing seemed to ease her, nobody had proved able to open "the door of her spirit." So Lady Mullinger said, and she was positive that Father Holt would open the door, he alone, and she would arrange that nobody should disturb them, her *salottino* would be free (they would have tea in the big room), and he and poor Charlotte could then have a "nice little talk." Lady Mullinger had set her heart on it—"just a nice little talk, quite informal"; she shouldn't tell poor Charlotte that he was expected, and he could just draw her aside, after tea, and help the poor thing to "find her way." The convenience of the *salottino* was urged once more, and the tact with which Lady Mullinger would keep her other guests out of it; and the ghost of the smile was upon the lips of Father Holt as he repeated, very distinctly, his refusal to make her a promise. Poor Charlotte would evidently have to find the way for herself, and Lady Mullinger abounded in despair.

Cooksey had introduced me to the beautiful priest, and I had one of his sharp glances to myself. For half a second I thought he was going to be interested in me, and I sat up with pleasure; but then I was turned down, I was placed with the rest of the company, and I perceived that I was no finer or rarer or more exquisite than Cooksey himself. It was worse, however, for Cooksey than for me, and the contrast between his natural exuberance and his shrivelled loose-jawed malease under the eye of Father Holt was melancholy indeed. Father Holt was the real thing, Cooksey could only pretend to be the real thing in his absence. You can't attain to the heart of Rome, after all, by the simple and obvious

methods of a Cooksey; you can't set off from Bath and Wells, travelling to Rome because Rome attracts you, and then expect to find yourself on terms of equality with Father Holt, whose foot was on the stair of the Vatican when Doctor Tusher (your spiritual forbear) was scraping to his lordship and marrying the waiting-maid. Cooksey could impose upon *me*, with the airy flourish of his intimacy with a world from which I was locked out; but he was reduced to the position of a very raw new boy in the company of the born initiate. Poor old Cooksey—it was a shame that I should be there to see it.

He couldn't renew his pleasant gossip with Lady Mullinger, and he rather stupidly persisted in trying to range himself with Father Holt. He received his measured stint of Father Holt's admirable manners, and his uneasy gratitude was pathetic. Where was now my Cooksey of the liberal jest, of the gay scuffle with Monsignor Mair? The conversation drooped, and presently Father Holt had slipped off again into the background, where there now arose a small stir of a new arrival. He was at the head of the staircase which ascended to the scaffold, he was welcoming somebody who emerged from below; and this was a little old lady, at whom the eyes of the company were turned with cautious curiosity. Cooksey nudged me, whispering her name and her title, both very splendid; as discreetly as I might, I stared at her with all my attention. None of us ventured to join Father Holt in the graceful and natural ceremony that he made of handing her to her place in the front of the platform. He dropped into the chair by her side, he engaged in a talk with her that we couldn't overhear, and he was subtly transfigured as he

did so. There was no change in his composure and his bland dignity; but he seemed to sink with relief into a society where he felt at home. The rest of us were silent, we couldn't set up a rival society in the face of *that* exhibition; and besides we wished, I think, to miss nothing of its effect.

She was small and shabby and very neat; her hair, under her black veil, was scraped together in a little grey knob; she had a strange old mantle upon her, short to her waist, of much-worn black, and her tiny arms appeared beneath it, with hard white cuffs, ending in gloves that were like the Russia-binding of a prayer-book. She was not pretty, but she was perfect; her eyes were very sweet and soft, and her face had no colour in it at all, and the light that shone out of her eyes seemed to shine equally through the diaphanous pallor of her cheek. I never saw any one so transparent; she looked infinitely fragile—because it was as though you could see through her and could see that she hadn't a drop of common life to give her substance. I could hear the gentle purity of her voice, with its quiet and even intonation. She was English, though the name and the title that Cooksey had spluttered in my ear were not; she was intensely English—she couldn't otherwise have talked with that smooth silk-thread of a monotone which was so well in keeping with the pearl-glimmer of her face. She was perfect indeed; and if she dressed in her rusty black and wrung her hair into its knob with the purpose of making the utmost of her wondrous distinction—why then she did rightly and her style was consummately chosen, for her distinction was enhanced beyond measure by her queer little white-cuffed dowdiness. All the rest of us were things of such tawdry

attractions, such twopenny pretensions; she must have walked in a moving circle of perpetual vulgarity, for I can scarcely imagine a face or a word or a movement that wouldn't strike you, at the moment when you looked away from her, as the commonest trash.

Didn't I even perceive that Father Holt's distinction was not what it had appeared a minute ago? It was now just a thought too sleek, too glossy, too well-appointed; and I wondered wildly if I was never to come to the end in my discovery of finer shades and finer. So the best has still a better—but indeed I *had* come to the end at this point, for I have never reached a better in her kind than the great little old lady of that morning in St. Peter's. Lady Mullinger positively creaked with reverential contemplation; she didn't aspire to attracting any sign of notice from the great lady—who seemed, however, to ignore our company in modest and delicate shyness, not in pride—but she pored, she gloated upon the vision with all her being. Poor Charlotte was forgotten, Cooksey had dropped out of the world; Lady Mullinger was intently committing to memory the details of so historic an impression. Much would be heard of it, no doubt, at tea in the big room on Thursday. Meanwhile I was not far behind her, I confess, in using the opportunity of the moment; I was fascinated by this sudden exaltation of my standard in the grace of the highest style.

But the brilliance and the rumour of the great church, filled more and more with crowding movement, made it soon impossible to attend to any other than its own distinction. This was a staring and thumping affair by comparison with the small voice of perfection; but mere size, when it is miles high, and mere gold, when it is

inches thick, and mere noise, when it is in the throats of all the tribes, will use their overbearing power and assert their dignity. There was nothing perfect in the seethe and clamour of the pilgrims, nothing in the sprawl of ostentation over the whole adornment of the scene; but it was a vast and riotous and haphazard work of genius, all of it together—the overflow of an imagination no better than my own, or not so good, but as large as an ocean against my own poor painful tap-trickle. The passion that rolled along the nave and swept round the hollow of the dome, toppling, breaking in uncontrollable excitement—I hung over it, clinging to my perch on the tribune, and I flung into it my own small cup-full; but how could I think to swell it with these few drops, claiming to ally myself with genius of *that* enormity? It was vain, I was the flimsiest of onlookers; and the pilgrims could bring a tribute to Rome that was profuse enough, indiscriminate and coarse enough, to fill the chamber prepared to receive it, to brim the church of St. Peter in an hour or two. Their capacity was well-matched; Rome and the pilgrims, they wrought upon the same scale, they understood each other.

Rome, yes—but what about the Romans? Father Holt surveyed the struggle of the pilgrims with something like the high indifference of the philosopher at a show of gladiators; he inclined his ear to the little transparent old princess beside him, he received her remarks with courteous care; and as for her, she was as far aloof from the common scramble as a flower that unfolds upon the cliff-edge above the booming ravine. Cooksey indeed was intent on the display with all the eager bulge of his eyes; but he had frankly relapsed into sight-seeing, he was just a Briton in foreign parts.

Lady Mullinger, though she murmured to her neighbour that the zeal of the crowd had "filled her heart," couldn't really attend to anything but the princess; she glanced perfunctorily at the crowd, but she was trying all the while to catch the silvery murmur that was holding the privileged ear of Father Holt. It was altogether evident that our party on the scaffold was neither of Rome nor of the pilgrimage, and the great affair proceeded beneath us with a roar and a rush that sounded more and more remote in my hearing, even while now it mounted to its culmination. That "real Rome," of which I thought I had been learning so much, was magnificently bestirring itself to accept the homage of its swarming subjects, and I tried to look through their eyes and to see what they saw in their jubilation.

They at least had no doubt, they knew where to look for the genius of Rome. Far away across the church and down the nave, somewhere near the great portals at the end, there was a side-door, and a broad lane from this door had been cleared through the crowd. Rome was very soon to issue from the door, it was for Rome that the lane was kept open along the roaring church. But a church, do I say?—it was the temple of Rome, the "great main cupola" of the Roman genius. It stands upon the hill of the Vatican in our day, and it has stood there for some little time; but its rightful place is the Capitol, the mount of triumph—it is there that the temple belongs. Kings and queens were led captive to that shrine, the multitude mocked and jeered at their abasement; and I see what is wanting to the due completeness of the resounding assembly in St Peter's—it is the presence of captive kings and queens, brought low by the power of Rome, over whom the multitude might

exult with glee and ferocity. And indeed the multitude would, it is easy to see; *I* shouldn't, nor Father Holt, nor the rest of us up here, and that is why we feel thus cut off from the tumult beneath us; but the pilgrims would delight in deriding the poor dazed wretches, and their reverence for the majesty of Rome would be the more enhanced. This joy, which they would have tasted upon the Capitol, is denied them upon the tomb of Peter; but they have lost nothing else by the shifting of the shrine. Rome above all, Rome the wonder of the world, is still the attraction of their worship; and from the door of the temple that we watch with strained expectation, suddenly hushed as the great moment approaches, Rome is about to emerge and appear before us. Look, it is there—a high swaying throne or pedestal, borne upon the shoulders of faithful knaves, and an ancient white-robed figure that sits aloft, springing upright and subsiding again with outstretched hand, and a smile, a fixed immemorial smile in a blanched face, beneath a pair of piercing eyes: Rome, Rome indeed.

AND COOKSEY TOOK ME TO TEA, THAT same day, with his little old friend Mr. Fitch. I was greatly charmed by Mr. Fitch, who was small and frail and wore a dust-coloured beard; and his first suspicion of me (he was afraid of the young) was allayed when he found that I knew and adored a particular Roman church or two, remote and neglected, which he didn't suppose that a casual intruder like myself would have discovered. I remember how Cooksey threw an arm of patronage around me and explained that he had been my guide to the holy places of the city; but Mr. Fitch caught my eye with a twinkle of intelligence, quickly withdrawn, which set up a happy understanding between us on the spot. He did the honours of his apartment with pleasant chirps and fidgets, hospitably bustling about the tea-tray, beaming and fussing and apologizing, with bird-like cries to the stout maid-servant who was energetically seconding his welcome.

Mr. Fitch was a scholar, a student, who worked daily in the library of the Vatican. I believe he was a hundred years old, and indeed he looked it; but he didn't appear to have *grown* old, only to have suffered a slow deposit of time to accumulate upon his person. Time was deep upon his hair and face and clothes; but a few score years more or less could have made no difference to the cheerful little bird-spirit in his breast, and it was because he was shy and defenceless, not because he was old, that he feared the onslaught of the young. A young person, however, who was found to have made his way unaided to the church of San Cesareo, far away among the vineyards on the verge of the city, was one towards whom Mr. Fitch could hop and twitter in kindly confidence,

and he did so. Before we parted he invited me to lunch with him a day or two later, and I fully understood that this was for him a remarkable demonstration. "Gina!" he called, and Gina, the voluble maid-servant, came from the kitchen with a run, to receive his command concerning the festival. She was delighted, she swept me into the happy plan, she seemed to be immediately arranging a treat for two merry little children, for me and Mr. Fitch. We were like children between her broad palms, all but hugged to her bosom; and with dancing eyes she told us to leave it all to her—she would do something splendid. "Gina will see to it," said Mr. Fitch; and he asked her whether he shouldn't invite some other young thing to join the party—what about the giovanotto who had called the other day? "Quel poverino?" said Gina—yes, the very thing. So we should be a party of three; and Gina clapped her hands and ran back to the kitchen, as though to set about her preparations there and then.

Mr. Fitch lived in the Via Giulia, deep in the depth of Rome, not far from the great mass of the Farnese palace. He had the craziest little apartment, a tangle of rooms with bare tiled floors, in which his funny frumpy English furniture, which might have come straight (and no doubt it had) from his mother's parlour at Cheltenham, looked strangely shocked and ill at ease. Forty years of the Via Giulia (it can hardly have been less) had not reconciled the mahogany overmantel and the plush-topped tea-table to the ramshackle ways of foreign life; mutely they protested, keeping themselves *to* themselves, wrapped in their respectability. Mr. Fitch, I think, had never so much as noticed their plight; he sat on a chair, he made tea on a table, and one chair or table was

as good as another for the purpose. He himself looked homely and frumpy enough, to be sure, lodged there under the wing, so to speak, of Julius the Pope; but *he* didn't feel at a loss, and he tripped along the proud-memoried ſtreet of his abode, with his decent English beard and his little mud-gaiters on his boots, as brisk as a sparrow. He accompanied us down the ſtreet and left us to go and invite the " poverino " to meet me at lunch; I see him waving us good-bye at some grand dark ſtreet-corner, where he turned and pattered off on his errand. Cooksey treated him with large protective kindness and contempt, out of which the old man seemed to slip with a duck of his head and a gleam of fright and amusement in his two bright eyes.

The luncheon-party, a day or two later, was a great success. I climbed to the apartment on the ſtroke of the hour, but the other young man was already there before me, and Mr. Fitch ceremoniously performed an introduction. The name of the youth was Maundy, and he proved to be one of those aspiring prieſts, novices, seminariſts—I don't know what their rightful name may be, but you know them well, you remember how they converge in long lines upon the Pincian Hill towards evening, how they pick up their skirts and romp with the gaiety of the laity upon the greensward of the Villa Borghese. Maundy was his name, and he didn't look, for his part, as though he had had much romping; he was pale and meagre, he reclined in a contorted cat's-cradle of thin arms and legs on one of Mr. Fitch's fringed and brass-nailed arm-chairs. If Gina's word for him meant a poor young specimen of chilly lankness she was right; his limp black soutane (is it a soutane?) couldn't disguise his sharp-set knees or the lean little

sticks of his arms. He jumped up, however, quite alert and spritely for our introduction, and he greeted me with a friendly high-piping composure that made it unnecessary to pity him. I had begun to pity him, as I always do feel compassionate, so gratuitously, at the sight of his kind—at the sight of the young novices, caught and caged and black-skirted in their innocence, renouncing the world before they have had the chance to taste it; but Maundy turned the tables upon me in a moment, and he revealed himself as a perfectly assured young son of the world, with whom I had no call to be sympathetically considerate. He shook hands with me, using a gesture which at that time, so long ago, was reputed a mark of distinction—I forget how it went exactly, but I think the pair of clasped hands was held high and waved negligently from side to side. Maundy achieved it with an air, not failing to observe that I had stepped forward to meet him with the ordinary pump-handle of the vulgar.

And so we sat down to Gina's admirable meal, and Mr. Fitch was in a flutter of pleasure and excitement, and Maundy talked and talked—he led the conversation, he led it almost beyond our reach, he led it so masterfully that it hardly escaped him at all. Mr. Fitch lost his hold on it at once; he sat with his head on one side, making small clucking noises of assent and question now and then, while Maundy piped and swept away from us in his monologue. But no, I oughtn't to say that he left us both behind, for he kept turning and waiting for me to catch him up, he flatteringly showed me that he wished for my company. "Such a blessing," he said, "to get away from piety"—and he intimated with a smile that it was I who represented the impious. He

desired my company, not my talk; and he might have been breaking out with the relief of unwonted freedom, soaring forth into topics that were discouraged in the congregation of the poor caged lambs; and I dare say he enjoyed the spread of his wings among the tinted and perfumed vapours of his fancy. It was all beyond Mr. Fitch, who clearly couldn't explain him with my ready mixture of metaphor; Mr. Fitch was bewildered. But to me the fancies of Maundy were sufficiently familiar; I knew the like of them from of old, and I fear we both took a certain pleasure in noting the bedazzlement of our host. The good soul, he sat and plied us with food and wine, while Maundy rattled away in his emancipation and I assumed the most impious look (I had small opportunity for more than looks) that I could accomplish.

Maundy threw off a light word or two about his place of residence and instruction in Rome—the seminary, the college, I forget how he referred to it. He seemed disdainful of all its other inmates; he couldn't regard them as companions for a person of intelligence and fine feeling. How he came to have placed himself among them, submitting to their rule, he didn't explain at the time, but I afterwards made out a little of his history. He had written a great deal of poetry at Oxford, and he had kept an old silver oil-lamp burning night and day before a Greek statuette, and he had had his favourite books bound in apricot linen, and he had collected thirty-five different kinds of scented soap—and I know it sounds odd, but he appeared to consider these achievements as natural stages on the path to Rome. He didn't go quite so far as to say that he repented of having made the journey and embraced the Roman

discipline; but after a year in the college or the seminary his mind, I think, was in a state of more painful confusion than he allowed me to see. Somehow the argument at one end, the Oxford end, where he had draped his dressing-table with an embroidered rochet (he told me so), seemed to have so little in common with the argument at the other, the Roman end, where he walked out with his young associates for exercise in the Villa Borghese and not one of them had heard of the poetry of Lionel Johnson; and somehow he had perceived the discrepancy without discovering where the chain of his reasoning had failed, and in the privacy of his discontent he was still floundering backwards and forwards, trying to persuade himself of the soundness of all the links—and perhaps seeking with a part of his mind (a growing part) to be convinced that he had reasoned wrong. Something of this kind, I believe, was fretting his life in Rome, and how it may have ended I never knew; he didn't confide his troubles to me—he simply hailed me as one who would possibly understand what it meant to him to have once, in an eating-house of Soho, been introduced to Aubrey Beardsley.

"The *passion* of his line," he said, referring to that artist; and again, "The passion of his *line*!"—and he described the scene in Soho, mentioning that the impression had wrought upon him so potently that afterwards he had sat up all night, with some golden Tokay beside him in a blue Venetian glass (not drinking it, only refreshed by the sight of it), and had written a poem, a sonnet of strange perfumes and fantastic gems, which he had dedicated in Latin to the hero of the evening. And then he had gone out into the dawn, and had wandered through Leicester Square to Covent Garden,

and had bought a bunch of mauve carnations; and he had thought of sending them, with the sonnet, to the master who had inspired him—but then he had returned to his lodging and had burnt the sonnet, heaping the carnations for a pyre, having resolved to guard the experience, whole and rounded and complete, in the secrecy of a faithful memory. He pointed out that to share these things is to lose them; as soon as you turn them into words for another's eye they cease to be perfectly yours, they are dissipated into the common air; which was why a friend of his, at Oxford, had insisted that one should write no words, paint or carve no colour or line, but only make one's images and pictures and poems out of the rainbow-tinted substance of memory, that exquisite material always awaiting and inviting the hand of an artist. So one avoids, you see, the sick disillusion of the writer who flings forth his maiden fancy to the ribaldry of the crowd; and Maundy himself had tried to rise to this height of disinterested passion, and in the dying perfume of the mauve carnations he had sacrificed what he saw to be a vulgar ambition. Oh yes, depend upon it, the greatest works of art have never been seen of any but their maker; and to Maundy it was a beautiful thought, the thought of the white secret statues locked away by the thousand in their secluded shrines, safe from the world, visited now and again by the one and only adorer who possessed the key. "But stay," said Mr. Fitch, "have you considered—" oh yes, Maundy had felt the weight of that objection, and Dickson after all (Dickson was the friend at Oxford) had written and printed his volume, but that was because he had found no other way to rid himself of an obsession; the white statue in his case

had become more real than life, and he had cast it forth to retain—to retain, you might say, his sanity.

Well, we must publish or go mad; that is the melancholy conclusion. Mr. Fitch stared doubtfully, and I shook my head like one whose hold upon his senses is precarious indeed. Maundy was quick to interpret my movement, and it encouraged him to yet giddier flights. He was hovering upon the climax of one of these when Gina happened to come clattering in with a dish; and she paused, sinking back upon her heels, the dish held high before her, and she threw up her head and she flashed out such an amusing challenging bantering look at Maundy, where he flourished his thin fingers in the zest of his eloquence, that I have never forgotten the picture of her mirth and her plumpness as it was framed at that moment in the doorway. "Ah, the poor little fellow," she said to herself, "he loves to talk!" And she too began to talk, breaking into his monologue with unabashed and ringing frankness; she set down her dish on the table with a dancing gesture, whipping her hands away from it like an actress in a play, and she stood by his side, patting him on the shoulder, approving him, scolding him, bidding him eat, eat!—and Maundy turned round to her with a peal of sudden light laughter, a burst of naturalness that changed his whole appearance; so that Gina had transformed the temper of the party and had raised it at once to a breezier level of gaiety than it would ever have touched without her. It was delightful; I couldn't understand a word she said, for her words flew shining and streeling over our heads as quick as thought, and I dare say Maundy answered their spirit rather than their meaning; but he responded well, he had some good neat conversational

turns of idiom that he shot back at her with a knowing accent, and she chuckled, she threatened him, she bustled out of the room with a smile for me and Mr. Fitch and a last fling of playfulness over her shoulder for Maundy. Mr. Fitch had said that Gina would "see to it," and he was quite right; we started afresh in a much better vein, all three of us, after her incursion.

Mr. Fitch produced a bottle of "vino santo" at the end of the meal and charged our glasses. The sacred liquor was exceedingly good, and he took heart from it to talk more freely. Gina had relaxed the strain of Maundy's preciosity, and he had begun to cross-question our host about his occupation, his early life, his establishment in Rome, with an inquisitive and youthful familiarity under which the old man shyly and prettily expanded. He told us how in the dim ages he had received a commission to do a little historical research among the manuscripts of the Vatican, and how he had taken his seat in the library, with a pile of volumes around him, and had never left it again from that moment to this. His first commission was long ago fulfilled, but it had revealed a point of singular interest, some debatable matter in connexion with a certain correspondence about a question raised in a contemporary version of an unofficial report of a papal election in the seventeenth century—yes, a matter which had chanced to be overlooked by previous investigators; and Mr. Fitch, sitting fast in his chair at the library, day after day, year after year, had been enabled to throw a little light upon the obscurity, and had even published a small pamphlet—"not, I must admit, for the very cogent reason that prompted your friend at Oxford, but from a motive that I justify as a desire for historical

accuracy, and that I condemn as vanity"; and Mr. Fitch, so saying, beamed upon us with a diminutive roguishness, more sparrow-like than ever, which he immediately covered by plying us anew with the sacred bottle.

And then he told us of the long evenings he had spent, year after year, in wandering among the ancient byways of the city—every day, when he was turned out of the library at the closing hour, he had set forth to explore the grand shabby old city that had now perished, he said, bequeathing little but its memory to the smart new capital of to-day. Rome had changed around him, he only had remained the same; but he could truthfully claim that he knew nothing, save by report, of Rome's rejuvenation—say rather of its horrible pretentious bedizenment in the latest fashion; for he had long abandoned his old pious pilgrimages, he now went no farther than his lodging here and the library over there, and he was proud to declare that he had never set eyes on a quarter of the monstrosities of which he heard tell. There was a break of indignation in his voice as he spoke of them; he had loved that Rome of the far-away golden evenings, it was all he ever *had* loved except his work, and he had been robbed of it, bit by bit, till nothing was left him but his well-worn seat among the state-papers and the pontifical dust that nobody had taken the trouble to clear away. I don't mean that he said all this, but it was all in his gentle regretful tone; he seemed to stand solitary and disregarded among the riot of modernity, and to utter a little tiny dismal reproach, barely audible in the din—the plaintive "how *can* you, how *can* you?" of a small bird whose nest has been trampled down by a pack of stupid louts on a holiday. It was hard on him;

the louts might just as well have stamped and scuffled somewhere else; but so it was, they had violated his wonderful Rome, and nobody noticed the sad small squeak of protest that arose here and there from a scholar, a student, a lover.

What did Maundy think of it all? Mr. Fitch brightened in hospitable care for our amusement; he didn't often have two young things to lunch with him, and he mustn't blight the occasion with his griefs; and so he recovered his spirit and tried to set Maundy off again in one of his droll tirades. What *did* Maundy think of it? Oddly enough the question of Rome, in the light in which it appeared to Mr. Fitch, hadn't seemingly occurred to him; Maundy's Rome had been predominantly a matter of Spanish altar-lace and rose-tinted chasubles, and a year by the Tiber had brought him to think that Oxford is now more purely, more daintily Roman than the city of the Popes; and that was really his only conclusion on the subject, and I don't believe he had given a thought to the Roman romance, vanished or vanishing, that had inspired the tenderness of Mr. Fitch. Maundy knew nothing of San Cesareo, nothing of the enchanted evenings among the ruins and the cypresses that were still to be recaptured, I could give Mr. Fitch my word for it, even in the desolation of to-day. "Ah yes, no doubt of it," said Mr. Fitch, "if one happens to be twenty years old to-day!"—but this he threw out in passing, and he returned to the strange case of Maundy, which perplexed and troubled him. It seemed that Maundy, whenever he went wandering through Rome, had only one interest in view; I forget what it was, but it had something to do with a point of ritual that Maundy excessively cherished; and he used

to go hunting round the city to discover the churches in which it was properly observed, keeping a black-list of those which failed to make good. It was the only aspect in which San Cesareo could engage him, and Mr. Fitch and I had both neglected it.

With Rome ancient or modern Maundy was otherwise little concerned. He listened blankly to Mr. Fitch's melancholy regrets; for him they were the mild ravings that you naturally expect from the very old. He was ignorant of the past, so ignorant that it couldn't raise the least stir in his imagination; he had lived upon flimsiness, upon a little sentiment and a little second-hand art, and he hadn't the stomach, I suppose, for Rome. It was curious to see how his insensibility puzzled Mr. Fitch. Maundy's glibness about unknown artists, about poems that hadn't been written and statues that drove you mad, had certainly surprised and impressed him; but the gulf of vacuity that yawned beneath Maundy's culture was a shock. Of course it only showed what a featherweight of a tatter it was, that culture; if you are thus artistic in the void, with the empty inane below you, it proves that your art hasn't substance enough to make it drop. But Mr. Fitch was too humble and kindly for that harsh judgment, and he seemed to be beating about in his courtesy to find an explanation more honourable to Maundy. Surely the young man was very able, very original and brilliant; if he spurned the treasures of the past he must have some clever new reason for doing so. I think I could have told Mr. Fitch that Maundy's reason was no newer than simple ignorance; and perhaps I began to parade my own slender stock of learning to mark the contrast. But Mr. Fitch was unconvinced, and I still

see him eyeing young Maundy with a sort of hesitating admiration, hovering on the edge of a question that he couldn't formulate. As for Maundy, he was thoroughly at ease; Mr. Fitch had confessed that the name of Aubrey Beardsley was unknown to him.

Anyhow the party had been most successful, and Mr. Fitch might go trotting back to his afternoon's work with the pleased sense that two very young people had made friends under his and Gina's auspices. He liked to observe that Maundy and I were making a plan to meet next day, and he blessed our alliance, taking credit for the good thought of acquainting Maundy's brilliance with my—my what?—my honest and old-fashioned enthusiasm. Gina too was satisfied; she stood at her kitchen-door as we went out, and she cordially invited us to come again. She pointed out that Maundy set me an example with his soutane and his aspiration to the priesthood, and she assured me that I couldn't do better than to place myself under his guidance; but at the same time she allowed that it wasn't for all of us to aim so loftily, and perhaps I was wise to be content with a lower standard. She cheerily dismissed us; she had developed these reflections in twenty seconds of farewell. We descended to the street, the three of us, and Mr. Fitch waved his hat as he sped off to his happy labours, and Maundy and I turned away in the direction of his seminary, where it was now time for him to rejoin his black-skirted brethren. I was rather proud to be seen walking beside his sweeping robe and clerical hat; it seemed so intimately Roman. But I found to my surprise that Maundy was quite uneasy and apologetic about it; he hated his uniform, he well understood that a man should feel shy of its

company. "If I were you," he said, twitching his skirt disdainfully, "I should hate to appear in public along with *this*." He was an odd jumble of cross-purposes, poor Maundy, and here was another glimpse of his natural mind. He was more of a self-conscious schoolboy than ever he was of a musk-scented sonnetteer; but in either character I am afraid, or I hope, that he didn't fit comfortably into his Roman retreat. I can't think that the cage was to hold him much longer.

VI. VILLA BORGHESE

WE HAD PLANNED NOTHING MORE enterprising than a stroll in the Villa Borghese; and we wandered freely in the ilex-shade, we inspected the children at play in the grass, we stood awhile to watch the young Roman athletes smiting the ball in their ancestral game, we took another turn beneath the magnificent umbrellas of the pines, we lingered for the finish of a bicycle-race in the great Greek stadium; and I don't deny that we loitered and strolled and looked for something else to watch because we found it difficult to make an excuse for separating. The fact is that we hadn't very much to talk about after all, without Mr. Fitch between us to be dazzled. Apart from him we made no very stimulating audience for each other, and we clutched at an interest in the games and the races to cover the bare patches of our conversation.

That very small interest was cracking under the strain when there appeared a fortunate diversion. Maundy, after a pause, had said that the leading bicyclist was a splendid Roman type, which was just what *I* had said before the pause; and he had remembered this and had hastily suggested another stroll, and I (after a pause) had observed that the park was extraordinarily classic (an earlier remark of Maundy's); when it chanced that in a green alley we came in sight of an old gentleman seated on a bench, a battered but dignified relic of a man, who faced the prospect mildly and blankly, waiting, as it seemed, till some one should happen to pass by and sweep him up. "There's old Rossi," cried Maundy, and he rapidly explained that he had lodged with the old man's family when he first came to Rome, and he was

sorry, but he must stop for a minute—we both jumped at the diversion, a timely one.

We were still a little way off, and as we began to move towards the old man two women appeared, an older and a younger, bearing down upon him from the opposite direction. They were delayed for the moment, as they approached, by their own conversation, which seemed to shoot up into an argument demanding settlement before other matters could be taken in hand. We hung back, Maundy and I, and finally the old man was taken in hand, literally enough, and in a style which suggested that the argument had ended to neither lady's satisfaction. He apparently needed a good deal of rousing and re-arranging of shawls and wraps, and I noticed that the argument showed signs of beginning again over his heedless head. At length he was brought to his feet, his stick was put in his hand, and the party prepared to set forth. Immediately the two ladies caught sight of us, recognized Maundy and raised a cry of delight. Ah, what a fortunate meeting! They had been arguing in Italian, but they now spoke a free crisp English; they greeted us with much politeness, dropping the old man as one might put down a parcel on a chair. He blinked and subsided upon his bench again, while I was introduced to the ladies—Miss Teresa Shacker (so the name reached me at least) and Miss Berta Rossi; in these terms Maundy referred to them, and they were good enough to express their extreme pleasure in making the acquaintance of his friend.

They quickly took his friend into their confidence; I learned that they were aunt and niece, sister-in-law and daughter of the speechless old bundle on the bench. Aunt and niece were very much alike. Teresa the aunt

was tall and spare, with pouched white cheeks, a coil of black hair on which her headgear stood high, and long arms assertively kid-gloved and buttoned and tight. Berta the niece was white with slightly more lustre, black with a little more profusion, gloved and hatted with the same defiance. The loose luxuriant evening flowered around us while Berta and Teresa established their effect; and their effect stood forth, hard and high-lighted as a bit of china, quite eclipsing the lazy sprawl of sun and shadow among the trees. There was an artistic passion in their looks and tones as they wrought. The accidents of a dim old man, a dark grove and an April sunset, fell away from them, were forgotten, and in the cleared space they created a social occasion out of the slender material that we offered, Maundy and I. They found it sufficient, they set to work with lucid determination. Long practice had made them perfect, and the entertainment ran without a hitch. All the talking was theirs; they talked in an antiphon so glib that it must have been rehearsed—only that was impossible, since it fitted the chance of our encounter; so they talked, let me say, with the skill of the old Roman improvisers, who never hesitated for a rhyme on any subject you could set them. Half an hour later I knew a prodigious amount about Teresa and Berta, and I don't think they knew anything at all about me.

Who were they, and what? Their English dialect, in the first place, was a study by itself. "What a pleasure," said one of them, "to hear some English speaking!"—and immediately they explained to me that they were "mad for England," such was their phrase, and that I must talk to them of nothing but England for their

pleasure. "For we," said Teresa, "being English maternally, love to talk our language like anything, and we are both a little wee bit cracked on the head about England"; and Berta put in that they weren't English, not strictly, but rather Virginian—"Ah," said Teresa, "but Virginian is most English of all, as you know so well—and you mustn't come down on us for a couple of Yankee women, no, not at all." "Yankee, good God!" cried out Berta, "ah no, not a bit of it; our family came of England in the beginning by origin; I 'ope you haven't thought that we spoke as Americans, so very ogly, all in the nose!" "We are always fewrious at everybody," said Teresa, "who will believe us American." "But Mr. Maundy has told you about us—is it true?" asked Berta; and Teresa chimed in with the next versicle, and Berta caught her up with the response, and between them they brought out their history in much profusion of detail and folded me into their family circle with a will.

They bethought themselves of the old man on the bench and proceeded to display him. He was enrolled for the part of a benignant Œdipus, tired at the end of a long day, weighted with his knowledge of the jealousies and vindictive passions of the world, but not embittered by them, only mellowed by many hoary years of patience and fortitude. It was a fine exhibition of patriarchal and republican simplicity. He neither spoke nor moved nor seemed to hear anything that was said, but his attendant maidens gave life to the part on his behalf. The grand old man, survivor of a heroic age—had he been the inspiration of Mazzini, the counsellor of Cavour, Garibaldi's right hand?—all three perhaps, and anyhow a flaming brand of freedom in the bad days of

which we younger folk knew only the eloquent tale. To think of those terrible times of oppression, of persecution and bigotry! This patriot had given all, had sacrificed fortune and strength to the cause of Italy in her woe, when the land lay groaning beneath the yoke of tyrant and priest. But there were traitors even in the camp of enlightenment, and his feelings had suffered the cruelest laceration. His feelings were more to him than any personal hopes or ambitions, so that little need be said of the utter collapse of these also. He had withdrawn from the struggle, had married a wife who was all sympathy, and had passed into a profound retirement. The struggle of poverty was hard; but what is poverty when it is sweetened by the heart's affections? The poor lady, Teresa's sister, was dead these many years; she had bequeathed her husband, her two young children, to Teresa's care. Poor Leonora had had a soul too great for her frame; the artistic inheritance in her blood would not allow her to rest. She was the daughter of an artist, and the fire had descended on her —that fire which had been withheld (perhaps mercifully, who knows?) from Teresa, the younger sister.

Out it all came in a cataract. I kept my head as well as I could, and I glanced with respectful admiration at the bundle of shawls that had borne these historic shocks. But the ladies let him drop once more, having played out his part for him; and they launched into a strophe of which the burden was Leonora, poor Leonora with the fever of art in her veins, and yet so human, a true woman, proud to devote herself to the task of binding the wounds of a hero. Maundy—where was Maundy all this time? He was fidgeting restlessly on the edge of our group, and I judge that the tale of the

hero and his bride wasn't new to him; he now managed to interrupt it with a word to excuse himself, to bid us good-evening and depart. He left me in the hands of Teresa and Berta; I saw them close about me and cut me off from the chance of declaring that I too must be going on my way. Really, these women—they were like famished creatures, rejoicing in the taste of fresh blood; they hadn't the least intention of resigning the chance. So they found they should like to walk a little further under the trees, to enjoy the evening; it occurred to them both that the evening ought to be enjoyed, for they were passionately fond, they said, of the country.

"You English are all so fond of the country," said Teresa, "you are such lovers of sporting!" She had meant to say "we English," but she wasn't so awkward as to correct herself. She broke off into an ecstasy over the evening sunshine. "I adore," she cried, "the solitude, the quiet of the country." The spot where we happened to be pausing was not very countrified; for close to our green alley was an enclosure covered with little chairs and tables, from which there went up a volley of the brilliant chatter of Rome; but it reminded Teresa of the country days to which they always looked forward in the summer, when they went away to the mountains or to the baths. What mountains? Well, they sometimes went to Frascati—"si sta tanto tanto bene in campagna," exclaimed Teresa without thinking, and she remembered at once that the language into which she dropped without thinking should be English, the native English in which she habitually (she made it clear that she habitually) thought and dreamt. As for the "baths," they went occasionally to the sea; Berta was the girl for the sea—she would like to walk for

miles along the shore, alone with nature, quite out of sight of everybody. "Our Italian friends think me an extraordinary gurl," she brightly confessed, "as mad as a—as a hunter." She had a misgiving as she produced this English idiom, but she recovered herself to pick up the next *réplique*. "We shock our Italian friends jolly well," she said; "ra-*thur*!" The last word had an English note that quite reassured her.

But how was it that they came to be so English? Oh, they recurred again to the strophe of Leonora—who was Teresa's sister, you understand, and Berta's mother. Leonora and Teresa, they were daughters of the house of Shacker—I never arrived at the true form of the name, which can't have been this; but they passed rather lightly over the strain of the Shackers, and I had only a doubtful glimpse of a Polish nobleman, an exile from an ungrateful country, who had once upon a time sought refuge in Rome, and had found in Rome a piece of good fortune in the midst of many and unmerited disasters. He had found a wife—and this was the point where Teresa flung up her hands and eyes in a mute effusion of piety for the shade invoked. In those old days, it appeared, there was a high and noble worship of art, of *true* art, that you wouldn't meet with anywhere now; and the proof was that a woman, a pure and splendid young sculptress from Virginia, could follow the calling of her art and carve the chaste marble in her studio, here in Rome, and be worshipped herself and respected by the chivalry of the other carvers and painters around her—oh, Teresa couldn't express the beauty of the homage that had encircled this grand severe young figure, white as the stone she chipped, whose life was dedicated like a nun to the service of art. No man could

touch her, none, save only the poor Polish outcast—one of the handsomest men of his time indeed, but now slipping on the brink of starvation and despair. Oh what a romance! The snow-white marble had taken fire; the handsome Pole became the father of Leonora and Teresa, the fair young sculptress their mother.

And so I now, about twenty minutes after our first meeting, possessed their history. Already they felt I was a friend; and Berta, who might reasonably think it was her turn to make a speech, began to hope that perhaps we might chance upon her brother—she believed he was with a party of companions in the park, not far off. Her brother? Yes, we now reached the next generation, the children of the aged patriot. They were two, Berta and Luigi; and Berta couldn't help wishing that I and her brother might become acquainted, we had such a deal in common. Luigi, she said, was dreadfully clever; he wrote articles in a newspaper, at least he would do so if he had the chance; but a man without influence was so terribly helpless, and Luigi was so awfully proud. Teresa interposed to the effect that Luigi, like the rest of them, was indeed half a stranger in Rome, though circumstances had compelled him to be born and to live there. "Ah," said Berta, "if only he could get on to a nice position in London—everybody is happy who goes to London, I think!" Luigi's great distress, according to Teresa, was that in Rome he was able to meet so few nice Englishmen. "And you," said Berta, "you are in business, yes?" They both looked at me expectantly; it was the first question they had put me, and it was followed by a close and lengthy cross-examination. I came out of it rather badly; I could give my story nothing like the brilliance of theirs,

though I obediently supplied them with the details they demanded. They noted my information, but they hardly seemed to be impressed by it. Berta presently suggested that we should turn back towards the tea-garden and look for Luigi.

We discovered Luigi surrounded by a group of young companions who certainly weren't nice Englishmen. They looked to me like decidedly second-rate Italians, but it didn't appear that Luigi found them uncongenial. They were all lounging and talking round one of the little tables, and Luigi's chair and his straw hat were tilted back at the same angle, and while he volubly held forth to the circle his loud black eye (he had the same plum-like eye as his sister and his aunt) was scanning and following the stream of people who passed on their evening promenade. He watched with care; Berta pointed him out to me as we approached, and she waved her parasol to summon him; but he shook his forefinger in reply without shifting his tilt or interrupting his discourse. Berta waved more urgently, and her thumb flicked out sideways in my direction as she looked at him; and Luigi then stared at me very frankly, lifted himself from his place and came forward to join us. He was a short and sturdy young man, smartly appointed, with a flashing smile that was polite, indifferent, insolent—that was anyhow very great. He paid no attention to his sister and his aunt, beyond waiting for them to pronounce an introduction. He smiled upon me and he spoke—and there was a sad drop in his style when he spoke, for his English came of a meaner strain than that of his ladies. It was not less fluent, it was more correct; but it had a vulgar flatness that wasn't inherited from the sculptress of Virginia. He was a

pretty young gentleman so long as he was silent, but he was common and dingy and commercial when he opened his mouth. I suppose he had successfully caught the intonation of the Englishmen he *had* been able to meet in Rome.

Teresa began to recount with vivacity the story of our acquaintance. Luigi listened to her for a moment and then murmured a few quick words of Italian, I don't know what they were, before which poor Teresa seemed to drop like a stone. He had cut her short in the middle of a word and her mouth hung open; but she said no more, she dumbly signalled to Berta, and two anxious women stood waiting before Luigi for their orders. He turned away from them and they understood; they spoke up bravely, reminded me (or told me) that I had promised to take tea with them on the following day, and declared that they must now hasten back to convey their old man home. They hurried away, and Luigi immediately displayed his smile again, suggesting that I should walk with him. His young friends appeared to hail him, to invite us both into their party; but he denied them without a glance, with the same slight shake of his forefinger, talking to me and drawing me off as he did so. He talked familiarly; he asked no questions, and at first he was chiefly concerned to explain to me the great disadvantage at which a gentleman almost necessarily finds himself in Rome. It is all very well if you are rich; but if you aren't, and if you happen to be a gentleman, why then Luigi thought there was no place in the world where you were so rottenly situated as in Rome. Roman society is utterly snobbish, and a gentleman doesn't care to push among people who think themselves too good for him; and the company of a lot of bounders is

unpleasant to a gentleman, and Luigi could assure me that it was a treat for him to shake hands with a gentleman, and not only a gentleman, mind you, but a man of the world, the right sort. He was pleased to imply that I was the right sort, and he cordially took my arm.

Luigi was odious. With a gush of memory from across the years it returns to me, the odiousness of Luigi. There was a touch of gallantry about Teresa and Berta, a swing of bravery in their pretensions—and a real impulse of unselfishness, poor creatures, in their care and respect for this vulgar youth. He was their pride, the object of their disinterested ambition; they took thought for him and used their simple arts on his behalf; and Luigi repaid them by spending an hour in implying to me that his family were an unfortunate drag upon a spirited gentleman. I soon understood that I wasn't to judge him by the dreadful commonness of his womankind; he was in the unlucky possession of a rarer refinement, a loftier pride, a diviner discontent than the rest of his house; and yet here he was, tied and handicapped, as I could see for myself, by a family incapable of profiting by his example. We took incidentally a brief glance at the loyalty with which he stuck to them, admitting the claim on him of two foolish women and a helpless old man, however unworthy; that was the kind of good fellow he was—too faithful and dutiful, perhaps, to do justice to the power that was in him. But though it was splendid of him to make the sacrifice, it was also very distressing that such a remarkable nature should be sacrificed at all; so back we came to the miserable scope that this infernal old Rome has to offer to the talents of a gentleman, if he is not prepared to cringe and crawl for

his opportunity. Luigi had much to say of it, and he passed an agreeable hour.

The sun burned lower, the great lordly pines were smitten with gold, the shadows crept along the green dells of the open park; and there came a moment at last when rebellion seized me, and I actually turned upon Luigi with a passionate outburst. It didn't last long, and he took very little notice of it; he merely paused, checked the flow of his lament, and proceeded again when I held my peace. Not long ago, you remember, I had been told at considerable length that my poor old Rome was no place for an artist; and that tirade of the opera-singer now came over me, while my companion ingeminated his cry that it was a place unworthy of Luigi. The opera-singer seemed the less fatuous of the two. I can easily bear to hear the name of art re-uttered in Rome, for the thousand-millionth time, in any connexion, on any pretext. Is Rome a step-mother to the arts?—it may well be so, and very likely Rome has thought nothing of smashing an artist, carelessly, disdainfully, at all the changes of the moon since the suckling of the twins. I can imagine that it may lie in the character of Rome to be often brutal to the arts; and by all means let an artist (though not that egregious Bannock indeed, for choice) stand up and hurl out his reproach. But when Luigi, in the face of Rome, maunders on with his vulgar stuff about the feelings of a gentleman, I rebel—I say that to mention these flimsy refinements in the noble great park of the Borghese is more than my sense of fitness will endure. A gentleman!—what has Rome to do with this nonsense of gentility, tediously and querulously droning in the

mouth of Luigi? No, Luigi; Rome, I believe, has had some slight acquaintance with greatness and grandeur since the twins fell out with each other, but Rome hasn't the mind to contemplate *your* precious distinctions. You might as well suggest to a poet of heroism, to the chanter of an immemorial saga, that he should study the manners of a tea-party in a suburban drawing-room.

My outburst took another form, however; these sentiments let it loose, but it was differently worded. Luigi only stared and waited till I had finished. I ended on the cry that seemed never to be far from my lips in those days, the cry of envy at the sight of the fortunate folk who could do their cringing, if it had to be done, in Rome. I said that I should willingly crawl the length and breadth of the city for the reward of an abiding place within the walls; I shouldn't mind what pope or king might think of me. Luigi very naturally felt that I hadn't quite grasped his situation. He resumed his discourse, and he began to point out to me that in my place and with my opportunities he would indeed go far. No doubt, for example, I had very influential friends. Not very? Well, only give *him* the chance of a footing in England, an opening that would bring him into the society of gentlemen—and he developed his theme still further, guiding it, as I presently noticed, into preciser detail than before. The sun had hardly faded from the tree-tops when I learned that a person in my position, with my advantages, was just the person whose hand Luigi had long desired to shake. And what did he take my position to be, and where, pray, did he recognize its advantages? I didn't put the question as plainly as this, for indeed I had no wish to meet Luigi

when he came to detail. I clung to generalities, and I suggested that there were plenty of most ungentlemanly people in London. "I'm sure I shouldn't think any of *your* friends ungentlemanly," said Luigi.

What are you to do with a youth like that? I own that I felt a little excited by the thought that somebody, were it only Luigi, should turn to me for patronage; and Luigi would certainly never discover just how much of it I had to dispense. And yet he had taken my measure fairly enough; he didn't suppose that my own credit was very high, but I could "mention his name," he said, in certain quarters, and he shot out a suggestion or two which showed that he had already considered the ground and was prepared. Any chance was a chance worth seizing; any simple Englishman thrown in his way might be a step on his ladder. But he was shrewd; and when he found that his hints were left lying where they fell, he turned aside to disparage his unfortunate family again—his sister, his aunt, his father, a bunch of futility that hindered a man in his effort to announce and express himself in the world. In a few words it was delicately implied that anybody who lent a hand to Luigi would never be embarrassed by Luigi's family—the admirable youth would see to that. He was rather uneasy to think that already his women had engaged me to visit them; he knew, to be sure, that their pride and delight was to serve Luigi, but a prudent man doesn't entrust his business to the bungling devotion of two ignorant women. With this in mind he insinuated that I needn't trouble myself with their officious invitations; though if I cared to see something of the town under *his* guidance, why indeed he was very much at my disposal. Rome the inexhaustible! The sacred place as Luigi saw

it was quite unlike the city of Deering's vision, or of Jaff's, or of Cooksey's; but he too was convinced that his was the real and only Rome, such as it was—a poor thing compared with the Strand of London.

THERE IS A LITTLE DIRTY WEDGE OF the ſtreets of old Rome, there is or there ſtill was a few days ago, which runs up the hill of the Ludovisi, on the way to the Pincian Gate. The garden of the Ludovisi crowned the hill, I suppose, in the days of Kenyon and Roderick Hudson, and now the vaſt new inns of the touriſt ſtand there; but even before the time of Rowland and Roderick the old ſtreets had encroached up to the very edge of the garden, and there they are ſtill, with the great hotels towering above them —a handful of tangled byways between the boulevard on one side and the tram-line on the other. These papal relics are exceedingly squalid, I muſt own, what with the cabbage-ſtalks in the mud and the underclothing that hangs drying in the windows; but they are charmingly named, and Luigi's family lived in the Via della Purificazione.

From the doorſtep of the house à narrow black ſtaircase tunnelled its way upward, and I climbed in the darkness and the dankness to the apartment of my friends on the fifth ſtory. I rang and ſtood waiting, not in vain, for the delightful shock that seldom fails you on a Roman threshold; I knew it well and I counted on it, for nothing gives you a swifter tumble into the middle ages than the Roman fashion of receiving a ſtranger. You ſtand on the landing, and you might suppose that the commonplace door would open to the sound of the bell and admit you in a moment. Not at all; there is a dead silence, as though somebody liſtened cautiously, and presently a shrill cry of challenge from within—"Chi è?" So it happens, and for me the house becomes on the spot a black old fortress-tower of

the middle ages, myself a bully and a bravo to whom no prudent householder would open without parley; that deep dark suspicion, that ancient mistrust of the stranger at the door—it pulls me over into the pit of the Roman past, suddenly yawning at my feet. I used to wait for the cry when I knocked at a Roman door, and to wish that I could answer it and call back with the same note of the voice of history. It takes a real Roman to do so, and I chanced to hear a real young Roman do so once or twice; he answered the challenge with a masterful tone of command that he had acquired long ago, in days when he shouted and fought in the streets of Rome, a fine young figure in the train of the Savelli or the Frangipani.

Luigi's family kept a dishevelled old maid-servant, wild of hair and eye; insanely staring and clutching the tails of her hair she ushered me through a dark entry into the family apartment. It was a bewildering place; there were plenty of rooms, freely jumbled together, but their functions were confusingly mixed. I couldn't help knowing, for example, as I passed from one to another, that Teresa was hooking herself into her gown by a small scullery-sink in which there stood a japanned tea-pot and a cracked bedroom looking-glass. I was deposited finally in a very stuffy little parlour, smothered and stifled with a great deal of violent blue drapery and tarnished gilding. The door was closed upon me, but it didn't cut me off from the affairs of the household. There was a rattling of tea-things in the kitchen and the voice of Teresa giving directions in an urgent whisper; and from somewhere else there came another voice, a man's, that was new to me—a voice which uttered a fruity torrential Italian, quite beyond any apprehension

of mine, though I could easily tell that it wasn't the language of formal compliment. Before long Teresa rustled brightly into the parlour, one hand outstretched, the other searching stealthily for an end of white tape that had slipped through her hooking and wandered over the back of her skirt. She welcomed me on a high-pitched note, at the sound of which the man's voice immediately stopped; and she drew me forth through another small room, containing an unmade bed, to an open window and a balcony that commanded a fine wide view of the city. The balcony was large enough to hold a table and two or three bedroom chairs; and there we found Berta, together with a man who offered himself politely for introduction to the new-comer.

"Mr. Daponte," said Berta, presenting him. He was a very short thick man of forty or so, chiefly composed of a big black moustache and a pair of roving discoloured eyes; he was glossily neat, though rather doubtfully clean. He bowed, while the ladies graciously exhibited him and explained that he spoke no English. "But he understands very well," said Berta, "and he loves to listen." The gentleman showed his understanding by a grin and a flourish of his large dirty hands, and a remark seemed to be labouring up from within him, so that we all paused expectant. It was an English remark, but it miscarried after all. "I speak—" said Mr. Daponte; and he spoke no more, appealing mutely to the women to help him out. But the Medusa-head of the old servant appeared in the window at that moment, and she fell over the step to the balcony and landed the tea-tray with a crash on the table; and in the commotion, while Berta busied herself over the cups and plates, Teresa drew me aside and whispered archly,

indicating the little gentleman, "He will be the hosband of my niece." Berta looked round and performed a blush—she felicitously glanced, that is to say, and ſtirred her shoulders as though she blushed; and she gave a little push to her swain in a girlish manner, which took him by surprise and myſtified him for an awkward inſtant; but then he nodded intelligently and responded with a playful blow. "Tea, tea!" cried Teresa, smiling largely; and we packed ourselves round the table to enjoy a plate of biscuits and a pale ſtraw-coloured fluid which Berta poured from the japanned tea-pot.

The view from the balcony was magnificent, only you had to overlook the nearer foreground. We seemed to be swung out upon space, above the neighbouring house-roofs; and beyond and below them was a great sweep of the sunlit city, with the dome of St. Peter like a ſteel-grey bubble on the sky-line. But the nearer house-roofs, crowding into the foreground, made a separate picture of their own, and I found it difficult to look beyond them. There is much oriental freedom of house-top life in Rome, on fine summer evenings; you scarcely catch a glimpse of it from the ſtreet below, but on Teresa's balcony we were well in the midſt of it. Bath-sheba wasn't actually washing herself but she felt safe and at ease in the sanctity of the home, lifted up to the sky, and she displayed her private life to the firmament Little gardens of flowers in pots, tea-tables like our own, groves and pergolas of intimate linen, trap-doors and hatches from which bare-headed figures, informally clad, emerged to take the evening air—it was a scene set and a drama proceeding there aloft, engaging to the eye of a ſtranger, and our balcony was hung like a theatre-box to face the entertainment. Close in front,

just beneath us, there was a broad space of flat roof on which the householder had built an arbour, a pagoda of wire with greenery trained about it; and in the arbour sat the householder himself, a grey-headed old priest, crossing his legs, smoking his cigar and reading his newspaper; and a pair of small children scuttled and raced around him, while he placidly took his repose, and rushed shrieking to meet a young girl, who climbed from below with a basket of clothes for the line; and the priest looked up, waved his cigar and cried out a jest to the girl, who stood with her basket rested on her hip, merrily threatening the children who clutched at her skirt. The blast of a cornet came gustily from another roof-sanctuary, further off, and there a young man was perched astride upon a bench, puffing at his practice in solitude. And so on from roof to roof, and I found myself sharing all this easy domestic enjoyment of a perfect evening with rapt attention.

The voice of Teresa recalled me; for Teresa was appealing to me to confirm her, to say that she was right in telling Emilio (Emilio was Berta's betrothed)—in telling him some nonsense, whatever it was, about the splendour of London, its size or shape, its social charm; Teresa was certain of her fact, for once she had spent a fortnight in London, and now she dwelt upon the memory. A sole fortnight—but how she had used it! She had discovered in some handbook a scheme for the exploration of all London, within and without, in fourteen days; it appears that after fourteen tours of inspection, each of them exactly designed to fit into a long summer's day, you may be satisfied that you have left no stone of London unturned. Only to be sure you must rigidly stick to the directions of the handbook, and

Teresa had to regret that they didn't include the spectacle of Queen Victoria; which was the more to be deplored because actually she had had the chance, and yet couldn't take it because the handbook forbade. You see she had duly taken her stand one morning, according to plan, before Buckingham Palace; and a crowd was assembled there, and a policeman had told her that the Queen was to appear in ten minutes; but ah, the handbook gave her only five for the front of Buckingham Palace, and then she must seize a certain omnibus and be off to the Tower; and she couldn't upset the whole admirable scheme on her own responsibility, now could she ?—so she hadn't seen the Queen, and she couldn't convince Emilio of something or other which I could certainly confirm if I would. What was it ? Apparently Teresa had just been telling me; but I was so much interested in the young man with the cornet that I had missed the point.

For me the point lay rather in the surprise of our meeting together upon a roof in Rome to talk about Buckingham Palace. I met the appeal rather wildly, but Teresa was contented; Emilio perceived that she knew more of London than I did, and the two women struck up a familiar selection from their repertory, the antiphonal strain of their singular affinity to all things of England, of the English. How they adored the " dear old country," they said—how they were drawn by that call in their blood, of which I knew. Berta too had seen London, she had spent three days with her father in a boarding-house of Bloomsbury; she had saluted and recognized her home. So lost, so transfigured were they in their Englishry that the Roman evening all about them was again forgotten, it touched them not at all. Berta

begged me to remember how from Gower Street you may ſtep round the corner into the sparkling throng of Tottenham Court Road; and "the policemen!" she cried, and "the hansom cabs!" and "Piccadilly Circus!"—Berta hadn't much gift of description, it was enough for her to cry upon the names of her delight. Emilio's gooseberry-tinted eyes were ſtrained in the effort to underſtand our English talk; he could offer no opinion upon its subject, for all his mind was given to its translation, word by word, in his thought; but perhaps he didn't entirely approve of the general drift, for it was not quite seemly that Berta should display an experience of the world in which he couldn't share. She gave him no attention, however; for she was quite carried away, the mad thing, by her fond enthusiasm over our dear old country. She was a little bit cracked on the subject, her aunt had said; and her aunt leant forward and tapped her on the cheek with tender ridicule. "You silly child!" said Teresa—for it was not to be forgotten that the call of the English blood came from *her* side of the family, and that Berta ſtood at a further remove than she from the pride of their lineage. "But her father," added Teresa, "is juſt as bad. He was always italianissimo, as they say here, but he loved the English freedom. The Italians do not underſtand our adorrable freedom."

No, of course not. Rome, that bad old genius of tyranny, lay outspread beneath and around us, bathed in the spring-sweetness of the firſt of May. The white-headed prieſt had folded his newspaper and was attending to his flower-pots, snipping and fondling his carnations; while the two children were ſtruggling with bleating cries for the possession of a watering-can, which

they busily hoisted under the old man's direction to the row of the pots; and the girl, stretching her linen on the line, cried to them over her shoulder to be careful. The young man upon the further roof had laid aside his cornet and was singing, singing as he leant upon a parapet—a trailing measure that lingered upon clear high notes with a wonderful operatic throb and thrill. On another roof another group had assembled, lounging about a table on which a woman placed a great rush-bound flask of wine; they were a group of men, four or five of them, in dark coats and black soft hats, and they stretched their legs about the table and talked in comfort while the woman filled their glasses. I thought of Gower Street and Tottenham Court Road; but Berta's pitch was too high for me, and I felt that I flagged and dragged upon them in their fine English flight. But what matter ?—so much the more brilliantly their native patriotism soared and shone; and I couldn't but see that it was a true passion, genuinely romantic and pure, by which they were transported above the daily dullness of the Street of the Purification, above the lifelong habit of Rome.

"I think you are not so English as we are," cried Berta; and indeed it might seem so, as my eyes wandered away from Piccadilly Circus and followed the old priest and the children—the two children were still struggling and yelping joyously over their watering-pot. To Berta it might seem that I was no true Englishman, and I left it at that. Neither she nor Teresa was troubled with a doubt whether a true Englishman, sitting there on the balcony in the golden evening of Rome, would be found to yearn desirously to the thought of the boarding-house in Gower Street—"Invergarry" was the name of

the house, Berta said; perhaps I knew it? They certainly betrayed themselves badly with their innocent outcries. I wished that we might have had Cooksey or Deering on the balcony with us, to teach these women the style of the truly English. My own was below the level of Cooksey's—Berta was so far right. I ought to have shown myself more actively and resolutely Roman, I ought to have hailed the old priest with kindly patronage, I ought to have been ready to instruct Berta in the custom and usage of Roman life, leaving her to grapple as she could with the life of Bloomsbury; Cooksey would have done all this, the good English Cooksey, true offspring of the diocese of Bath and Wells—" bien trairoit au linage," as they say in the old poems. The better you favour and hold to your lineage, if it is English, the more complacently you flout it upon the soil of Rome; it is the sign. Berta, poor soul, hadn't had the opportunity to grasp these distinctions. She had only passed three days at Invergarry, and she had learnt no more than to flourish the ecstasy of her intimacy with our dear old country. It takes more than three days, it takes a lifetime and a lineage, to teach you the true cackle of scorn, the thin unmistakable pipe of irony, which you may hear and salute upon the lips of Cooksey and of Deering. They are the sons of the dear old country, and I should recognize their accent anywhere; Berta and Teresa, if they live for ever, if they live till the reign of the next English pope, will never acquire it.

But what about Luigi? Luigi, they said, had been detained by business, but he hoped to join us before the tea-party was at an end. And presently, sure enough, Luigi appeared on the balcony with his conquering

smile; and my first thought was to study *his* accent, which differed from that of his women and which indeed, truth to say, was considerably more genuine than theirs. It was not a pretty accent, as I have said; it was exceedingly low; but his slurred and flattened mumble, with its bad vowels and vulgar stresses, brought the pavement of London much nearer to me than the lyrical coloratura of his sister and his aunt. Luigi had only to open his mouth, only to say "*Ah* believe you" and "A give yer *mah* word," to throw something like a fog of the Thames-side over the fair southern evening; which should have pleased the ladies, only they weren't aware of it. Through Luigi's talk I dimly peered into the depths of the cosmopolitan jumble of Rome; and I saw a company of Englishmen, young blades of commerce, spirited young clurks in enterprising young houses of business, established upon the sacred hills in the hope (the vain hope, Luigi assured me) that Rome would awake from her stuffy old dreams, blinking and rubbing her eyes, to hustle out into the world of modernity. Sanguine souls, they thought the sleepy old place might yet be roused to bestir herself; but Luigi told them plainly that they didn't know Rome if they had any idea of that kind. *He* knew Rome—a dead place, dead and rotten and done for; it passed *him* why anybody who wished to do well for himself should come to Rome. They *did* come, however, quite a number of them; and Luigi frequented their society and caught their tones and sedulously practised their slang.

But in all that commercial society, you understand, there is nothing that will do a man any *good*; Luigi indicated the reason for this, and you will be surprised to hear that it was because these commercial chaps, clurks

and agents and travellers and such, are not gentlemen—not a gentlemanly lot at all. One frequents their society because no better is at hand; and one frequents it because one can't afford to miss *any* chance in a place like Rome; and perhaps one frequents it a little because a man likes an opportunity to swagger round the town with a company of dashing young strangers and to induct them into its resources of pleasure; but one doesn't care to lay stress upon these frequentations when it happens—when it happens that something just a little bit better presents itself. I state what was in Luigi's mind, I offer no opinion upon his judgment; Luigi, as you know, took the flattering view of my company that it was of the sort which might, if it were judiciously ensued, do a man good. But I am entitled to claim that in the end he was disappointed with me, and that the end came soon. I saw very little more of Luigi, and I believe he never discovered that "opening" at which he was prepared to jump, dropping the embarrassment of his family. Some voice of the air afterwards brought me the news that he had married the elderly widow of a Portuguese Jew, and that with her too, or perhaps rather with her late husband, he was grievously disappointed. His smile had carried him, I suppose, beyond his prudence.

Meanwhile I was able, as I say, to compare his note and accent with those of his family; and the result was that I warmed a good deal towards the valiant cheer of Berta and Teresa. They had dropped into the background (so far as that is possible on a small balcony where five people were now squeezed about the table) when Luigi made his appearance; they abdicated and he assumed the rule of the entertainment; and it

became so common and squalid under his direction that I clearly saw the bravery which the women had lent it till he came. We had been munching the biscuits with perfect dignity, and when Luigi began apologizing for them he seemed to degrade us all. Teresa had handed the plate like one who does honour to herself and her guest, and even Emilio, whose table-manners were not very good, had pulled himself together to imitate Berta's dainty fingering of her tea-cup. But now Emilio went entirely to pieces; he gulped, he filled his mouth with the dust of the biscuits and forgot about it while he greedily questioned Luigi, raising some matter of a promise or an appointment which Luigi rather sulkily discouraged. "Afterwards!" said Luigi crossly, in English, and Emilio gloomed in silence and resumed his mouthful of dust. I don't think those women had a gay or comely time of it when they were alone with Luigi; I had a vision of interminable sessions on that balcony, day after day, Luigi grumbling his discontent and his pity of himself in an endless acrid argument with the women, while the priest took his evening repose hard by and the young man on the further house-top blasted perseveringly upon his cornet.

How strange and sad that these people should have no more suitable stage for their dreary wrangles than a balcony swung out upon so much of the history of the world, an airy platform from which you could wave your handkerchief to the dome of St. Peter! I tried to measure what it might mean to Berta that in the midst of the golden-brown city beneath us, the treasury outspread before her every morning when she looked from her chamber, you could distinguish the smooth unobtrusive crown of the Pantheon; I pointed it out to her and

found she had never noticed it before. "La Rotonda?" she said; "but the Rotonda should be—" she didn't know where it should be, she didn't know anything about it at all, she had never seen the view from her balcony, though she knew it was very fine. "We have a so beautiful prospect," she said, surveying it with aroused curiosity, as though for the first time. "In Bloomsbury the view is not so fine," I suggested; and she turned her back upon Rome to protest that I didn't know my own good fortune, with beautiful London to enjoy whenever I would. But I liked her for the word; she loved London for the beauty of Gower Street, not for its openings and its chances; and she looked coolly upon Rome, not because it is no place for a gentleman, but because in Rome she had had more than enough of the care of a decayed old father, of the struggle with mounting prices and expenses—and very much more than enough, I dare say, of Luigi's sulking and complaining, though she still managed to think she thought him a handsome and brilliant young man. She had, however, secured a husband; Emilio wasn't handsome, but like Luigi she took her chance where she found it.

DAY AFTER DAY THE BOUNTY OF THE springtime was unfailing; and the day of our excursion to Albano began as a crystal, towered to its height in azure and gold, sank to evening over the shadowy plain in pearl and wine. If the world had been created and hurled upon its path to enjoy a single day, one only, before dropping again into chaos, this might have been that day itself—and quite enough to justify the labour of creation. But in Rome that labour is justified so often, between the dusk and the dusk, that the children of Rome have the habit of the marvel; so I judge, at least, by Teresa and Berta, who occupied most of the time of our small journey in wondering why they had forgotten to bring the two light wraps which they were accustomed to take with them in the country. Berta could only remember that she had laid them down for a moment in the—in the scullery-sink, I suppose, with the cracked looking-glass, but she stopped herself in mentioning the spot. And Teresa had all but lost her very smart ivory-hilted umbrella in the crowded tram, on the way to the station; and she was so much upset that more than once she thoughtlessly broke out to Berta in Italian—a sure sign in Teresa of ruffled nerves. We travelled to Albano by train, and in our flurry of discomposure we couldn't for a while attend to the landscape; but presently Teresa reflected that the light wraps would be safe where they were (she had read where they were in Berta's eye), and we could abandon ourselves to our national delight in the country.

The excursion had been the happy idea of the two ladies. Luigi luckily found that he had inevitable business in the city, and of course there was no question

of exposing the aged patriot to the risks of travel—he seldom ventured abroad; but a friend of Teresa's was to join us at Albano, a charming Russian lady in reduced circumstances, and perhaps Emilio would follow us later, and Berta had sent word to another friend of hers, a German girl, who lived out there, and possibly we should find Miss Gilpin too—only it seemed that Miss Gilpin was rather "proud of herself," Berta said, rather "high," and if she knew that Madame de Shuvaloff, poor thing, was to be one of our party she might think it beneath her; for Madame de Shuvaloff, you understand, had been reduced to keeping a boarding-house near the Ponte Margherita, to support herself and her little girl, and Berta for her part could see nothing dishonourable in poverty, but some people—"som people," said Teresa trenchantly, "think it wrong for som people to be even alive, isn't it?" We must, then, remember that *if* Miss Gilpin should condescend to accompany us—"condescend?" cried Berta, "I shall just give her a good piece of somthing if she condescends, oh yes I shall!" "You silly gurl," said Teresa, "always in a passion about somthing!"—and Teresa began to reckon the number of our party for luncheon, confusing herself inextricably in the effort to keep the certain and the probable and the unlikely in separate categories.

We had crossed the shining plain, had tunnelled into the hills and arrived at Albano before we had time to delight very much in the country; and even the glorious free English ramble that we were to take in the woods before luncheon consisted mostly of debates and delays, harassing doubts, wrong turnings—for Teresa was positively afraid of her niece's boldness, once the girl was let loose in the country, and she was resolved that

the crazy thing should incur no unpleasantness, so she darkly mentioned, such as may easily befall one in the wild places of the mountain. The wildness, Teresa seemed to hold, begins where the back-streets and the chicken-runs and the rubbish-heaps of the Albanians leave off; and our hour of adventure ran out while we peered round corners, measured the risk of climbing a stony path that disappeared in an ilex-wood, and recollected that we mustn't be led on to wander too far before the time appointed for our party at the trattoria. "How quick the morning passes in the country!" exclaimed Berta, casting out a black-gloved hand to beat off the flies and the puffs of white dust—the flies and the dust in the safer parts of the country are very thick. "But we must hurry back," Teresa reminded us; and we turned away from the prospect of the ilex-wood, keeping to the shade of a high wall covered with bright blue posters, and stepped out with more assurance to regain the street of the tram-line, the town-piazza above the railway-station, and the homely eating-house where Madame de Shuvaloff and the rest were to meet us.

Our party kept us waiting interminably, and in the end it consisted only of the Russian lady, reduced and charming, with her sharp and shrill little girl. Everybody else, it seemed, had failed us, whether in forgetfulness or in pride. But no matter, Teresa and Berta could make a party, as I have noted, out of the leanest material; and Madame de Shuvaloff (it is but a random shot that I take at her name) was one of those who occupy a large amount of room for their size. We waited long for her; but she came straggling into the trattoria at last—a tiny scrap of a woman with a thin pale face and huge eyes, a clutching and clawing and

shrieking little creature, like a half-fledged young bird of prey escaped from the neſt. She ſtrayed in upon us as though by accident, and with a shriek and a flourish of her claws, catching sight of us, she scrambled over chairs and tables, beat her wings in ſtartled surprise, dashed herself againſt the walls and ceiling—I give the impression I received—and disappeared again, fluttering out through the doorway with a cry for something she had left behind. It was her child that she had loſt, and there was a scuffle without, an encounter of clashing beaks, and she returned with the child in her talons—a ſtill smaller but quite as active young fledgling, which ſtruggled and shook itself free and bounced across the floor to its perch at our table. Teresa and Berta sat up, very decent and ſtraight-backed, to meet the shock of the party, and with the subsiding of the firſt commotion they were able to keep it more or less in hand. Our gueſts were induced to compose themselves on their chairs in the likeness of human beings.

They did their beſt, and the little girl indeed (her mother called her Mimi) ſtraightened her frock and folded her hands and pursed her lips in a careful imitation of Teresa, enjoying the pretence of social and lady-like manners. She improved on her example with a coquettish dart of her eyes (at the gentleman of the party) under lowered lids; she had a native expertness beyond the reſt of us, and at intervals through the meal she remembered to use it. But she broke down when a dish of food appeared, and she then became the voracious neſtling, passionate to be the firſt to get her fingers into the mess and to secure the likelieſt lumps. She screamed to her mother in a jumble of languages to give her *that* bit, the beſt, not the naſty scrap beside it; her

mother ordered and protested, Mimi fought and snatched—on the arrival of anything fresh to eat there was an outbreak of the free life of the wild. Mimi, pacified with the lump she needed, was again a young person of gracious style; and Teresa, quite powerless before these glimpses of the unknown, could resume her control of the occasion and the ceremony. Mimi then, momentarily gorged and at ease, watched us with a flitting glancing attention that I in my turn was fascinated to watch. Her mind was keenly at work, transparently observing and memorizing; she noted our attitudes, our speech and behaviour, she stored them away for her benefit; and I wondered what words she was using, what language she thought in, while she seized and saved up these few small grains of a social experience. Whenever she caught my eye on her she began immediately to make use of them; she consciously arched her neck, she fingered her fork with elegance, she shot her glances with eloquent effect.

Her mother meanwhile—but her mother was indeed a baffling study. Teresa was quite right, she was charming; she was perfectly simple and natural, and just as much so when she was human as when she clawed and shrieked in her native bird-savagery. When she was human she talked with a curious questing ingenuity in any or all of the civilized tongues. She raised us above trivialities, she neglected Teresa's questions about her journey, her plans, her unpunctuality; she started (in French) a fanciful disquisition upon some very modern matter of painting or dancing or dressing, some revolution in all the arts that was imminent; and it seemed that she was deep in the inner councils and intrigues of the revolution, which had its roots in a philosophic

theory (she slipped, without missing a step, into German) that she expounded in a few light touches of whimsical imagery (suddenly twisting off into Italian); and I can hear her assuring Teresa that the black misery of a woman's life will flush into pink, will whiten to snow of pure delight, if she breaks through the bonds of—I forget what, of earthly thought, of esthetic imprisonment; and I can see Teresa's blank white face, her bonnet-strings neat under her chin, her lips decently arranged as though her mouth were full of dough, while she waits her opportunity to declare that this modern art is all "too ogly, too drrreadfully horrible and ogly for words." The little visitor smiled sweetly and darted with nimble grace into further reaches of her argument —where she evoked a stonier stare upon the faces of Teresa and Berta, who began to look straight across the table at nothing at all as though they could suddenly neither see nor hear. There seemed to be no malice in Madame de Shuvaloff, but there was no shame either. She talked most improperly (in French), breaking through the last of the bonds that restrain us, not indeed from the snowier heights, but from the pinker revelries of speculation; and I don't know where it would have ended or how Teresa would have tackled the daring creature at last, but Mimi (who had quite understood that she was to look inattentive when these topics were broached)—Mimi presently distracted her mother and all of us by hurling herself (out of her turn) at the *fritto misto*, in a passion of fear lest the dish should be rifled and spoilt before it reached her.

Mimi was not a nice child, but her mother was decidedly attractive—far more artless, more unconscious, more heedless than her daughter. What in the world

was the history behind them? Madame de Shuvaloff never explained herself, and it "passes me," as Luigi would say, how she came to be keeping a Roman *pension* by the Ponte Margherita. Russian she was, Russian was at the bottom of all her tongues; but evidently it had for so long been overlaid by the rest of Europe that she had almost forgotten it was there. Each of her languages, however, was a language of her own, full of odd pretty tones and inflexions that coiled and scooped and curled with a singular music. When the struggle over the *fritto misto* died down Teresa seized the word with decision, the word that seemed furthest from Madame de Shuvaloff's indelicacy, and with Berta's ready help she kept the conversation on a purer level. We talked of the terrible rise in the price of provisions: did Olga know (Olga was Madame de Shuvaloff) that Luigi had found it was entirely due to the weakness of the government?—the criminal weakness of the ministry before the threats of the *bassa plebe*; and if you ask how it is that the common people insist on an increase in the cost of living, which seems improbable, Teresa assures you that in fact they don't know *what* they want, such is their ignorance and their folly. We only perceive that the country is in a sad condition, and Luigi declares—but Madame Olga suddenly shrieks out with a shrill exclamation, followed by a little fountain of airy laughter, for she has just remembered that she forgot to give any directions to her servant, before leaving Rome this morning, and she believes the creature capable of anything—of anything—and heaven knows what will have happened to the midday meal of her pensioners! "How many is your table?" asked Teresa with sympathetic concern. "Eighty!" cried

Madame Olga lightly, and she fumbled in her bag and showed us a couple of five-franc notes that she had expressly borrowed from one of her guests, only last night, for Colomba the cook to go marketing with to-day. Well, isn't it unlucky? "I shall lose them all —all my eighty!" the little lady humorously wailed. "I lose them always; Mimi and I, we shall starve!"

I expected a howl from Mimi, but she took it unmoved; she knew her mother. Teresa, it was evident, knew her less, for Teresa gloomed anxiously upon the prospect, trying to hold little Olga to her words and beginning to offer advice and warning. You couldn't trust a Roman cook—surely Olga had discovered that; and lodgers, in these bad times, are precious articles and you must handle them cautiously. "But how many did you say—?" It broke upon Teresa that Olga had played with her over the number, and her face was a pleasant mixture of dignity a little ruffled and mannerliness striving to meet a joke. Madame de Shuvaloff became instantly serious; and though it didn't appear that the disaster of the dinnerless pensioners weighed on her, she was desperate, unutterably hopeless, over the tragedy of a woman's life in the great horrible world. "Men," she said bitterly, "do what they will with us" —and the eyes of Berta and Teresa met in a swift glance as they hastily struck up their give-and-take on the question of the likeliest methods of attracting the right kind of lodger to share one's home. One should possibly advertise in the newspapers—but the topic was unfortunately chosen, for Madame Olga immediately flung off into a rippling titter of mirth, thin and savage, at the notion of "attracting," were it only as boarders at one's table, the men who make the world so black a

place for a woman. "All beasts!" she declared flatly; and this was her opportunity for a story that she addressed particularly at me, glaring with her great eyes in the horror of what she told.

Truly the Russian wild sends out strange little emissaries to the cities of civilization. This tiny frail slip of a woman, who looked as though a puff of air from the frozen plain would shrivel her dead, had somehow scrambled across Europe and held her own and lodged herself in a cranny of Rome; and there she had stuck, she had survived, you couldn't tell how, with a tenacity of slender claws that could grasp and cling where a heavier weight would have found no chance of foothold. She was evidently indestructible. The world, by her account, massed its ponderous strength to crush her; but there was nothing in her that might be crushed, no superfluous sensitive stuff to be caught by a blow; there was nothing but one small central nut or bead of vitality, too hard for the world itself to crack. She thrived upon the conflict; I don't for a moment suppose that the world was as unkind to her as it was, for example, to poor foolish old Teresa; but she believed herself to be singled out for its cruelest attack, and the thought was exquisite and stimulating. She had, moreover, a real artistic passion; her fire and thrill were genuine when she talked of the strange things that were doing among the artists; but I note that it had to be the art of the present, the art of a chattering studio rather than of a hushed museum—she couldn't have thrilled and fired before the beauty of the past and dead, where there aren't the same intoxicating revolutions to be planned and exploded upon an unsuspicious age. Drama she needed, and of drama you can always have

your fill if you know as well as she did how to make it. Why yes, she created a notion of mysterious conspiracy, somewhere lurking in the background, by her very refusal to explain and apologize when she was late for lunch.

As for her story of the baseness of men, told with extreme earnestness in three languages, she made a very good thing of it and we were all impressed. But much more striking than her story was the picture that rose before me of her establishment, her boarding-house by the Tiber, where a dozen lodgers (she reduced them to a dozen), mostly like herself from the Russian inane, gathered and mingled, quarrelled and stormed at each other, conspired, bribed the cook, made love to the landlady (of course I have only her word for it), eloped without settling their bills, lent her five-franc notes to pay at least for the next meal—but chiefly talked, talked day and night, sat interminably talking, while Olga rated the servants or hunted for the lost key of the larder, while Colomba had hysterics and dropped the soup-tureen, while Mimi killed flies at the window and had her own little crisis of nerves over a disappointment about a box of chocolates. All these visions appeared in the story—which was a story of the monstrous behaviour of one of the lodgers, a young man of whom Olga had tried to make a friend. A friend!—yes, Olga believed in friendship, in spite of a hundred disillusions; she believed in a species of friendship that transcends the material, the physical; but we needn't go into that, for though she *had* believed in it, the young man's behaviour had pretty well killed her faith, once for all, and she now saw that there could be no true friendship in a world where half the world (the brutes of men) have no sense

of honour, none of loyalty, none of idealism, transcendentalism, immaterialism; and Teresa still held her lips placidly bunched while Olga circled among these safe abstractions, but the little wretch came presently down with a bump again upon plainer terms, and it behoved Teresa to intervene with all her decision. Olga said that the young man had proved to be not only destitute of these safe vague qualities, but terribly in possession of other qualities, quite of the opposite kind, which she proceeded to name; and their names lacked that soft classical buzz and blur (idealism, materialism, prunes-and-prism—the termination is reassuring), and on the contrary were so crude and clear-cut that Teresa pushed back her chair and suggested another delightful long ramble in the forest, a "country afternoon," such as we all adored.

There really was no malice in Olga, the little wretch; for to be malicious you must at least have some consciousness of the feelings of other people, you must know what will hurt them; and Olga was aware of no feelings, no subject of sensation, save her own and herself. Imagine all the relations of the world to be arranged like the spokes of a wheel, with no crossing or tangling before they reach the middle; and Olga herself in the middle, with every thread of feeling that exists all radiating away from her into space: that was the order of nature as Olga saw it, that indeed was her fashion of introducing order of any kind into the universe. One must simplify somehow; and if, unlike Olga, you suspect people of thinking and feeling on their own account, all anyhow, turning the cart-wheel into a tangle—well then you must order your private affairs, your habits, your household at least, into some

kind of reposeful pattern. Olga had no need of a stupid mechanical pattern, the mere work of her own hands, to be imposed upon the facts around her. Let Colomba rave, let the lodgers hurl their boots among the crockery (she happened to mention it as one of their ways), let the boarding-house seethe and heave like a page of Dostoevsky: no matter, the universe kept its grand simplicity, all lines met at the centre, Olga was there. The story of the base young man had no bearing upon anybody but herself; Teresa was shocked, but Olga didn't care, didn't notice, and she went on absorbed in her narrative—or she would have done so if Mimi hadn't made another diversion (to be frank, she was sick before she could get to the door) in which the young man was finally dropped and forgotten.

Emilio now joined us, very hot and shiny from the train, and as soon as he had refreshed himself we issued forth—an orderly procession, for Mimi clung pensively awhile to her mother's arm; and it was agreed that we should enjoy ourselves unconventionally, fearlessly, in a walk through the greenwood to Castel Gandolfo. We mustn't forget, however, that Fräulein Dahl, Berta's German friend, would be descending from Castel Gandolfo (where she lived) to meet us; and we immediately saw that whichever of the forest-paths we chose we should certainly miss her. "We had better go perhaps no further than this," said Berta, pausing under the blue posters of the wall we had already studied that morning; and Emilio proposed the amendment that it would be safer still to wait in the middle of the town, by the tram-station, where the lady would be sure to look for us. But Berta yearned for the country; so she and Teresa spread a couple of newspapers upon a dust-heap under

the posters, gathered their skirts, deposited themselves with care, and pointed out that one had a charming glimpse of the country from this very spot. A little way up the lane indeed there was leafy shadow and the beginning of a woodland ride; and Olga, restlessly ranging, called to us to come further and take to the forest. But Teresa and Berta were established, and they declared themselves at ease where they were—though I can't say they looked very easy, with their veils pulled down and their knees drawn neatly together, both clutching the ornate handles of their umbrellas. "People will think we are strange gurls," said Berta, "sprawling by the road like this!" Emilio had to make the best he could of their wild English ways; he leant with resignation against the picture of a highly developed young woman in evening dress, who held out a box of pills with a confident smile; he sucked at a long cigar in silence. Mimi really did sprawl; she lay where she fell, she slept the sleep in which one repairs the disasters of a recent meal.

I followed her mother up the shadowy path into the woodland, where we were to watch carefully for Berta's expected friend. When at last you are clear of the pigs and chickens of Albano you plunge immediately into the Virgilian forest that spreads and spreads over the hills, between the two deep bowls of the lakes. The ancient darkness of ilex leads you on, and the darkness changes to hoary sun-sprinkled oak-shadow, to open spaces where the big white rock-rose flowers against the outcrop of the grey stone, and the path stumbles on into damp green tunnels among the chestnut saplings; and a laden mule, driven by a bare-footed boy, appears with a jangle of bells that carry me off and away, deeper and

deeper into the time-softened goodness of the wondrous land, the Saturnian land, the great mother of kindly beast and songful man—for the boy sings as he plods up the pathway, with long sweet notes that are caught by a hungry ear, caught and lost, caught again in the far distance with an echo of the years of gold, of the warm young earth in its innocence. How can we praise the land that Virgil praised? Leave the word to Virgil, listen while he repeats it again—again. I can hear nothing else till the last sound of it has died; and my companion, the strange little wild thing from the east, lifts up her finger and is silent and motionless till it ceases. What does Olga know of the golden years and the Saturnian land? Nothing, nothing whatever; but she listens with uplifted finger, entranced by the freedom of the forest, for a few fine moments forgetful of her own existence. Then she is herself again, flitting and scrambling down the path to meet a figure that approaches through the green shadows.

IX. CASTEL GANDOLFO

FRAULEIN DAHL CAME STRIDING UP the woodland path with a free swing of her arms and flourish of her staff—not a Virgilian figure, yet classical too in her way, carrying her head in the manner of a primeval mother-goddess of the tribes. Didn't the old Mediterranean settler, pushing inland from the coast where he had beached his boat—didn't he, somewhere in the ilex-solitude of the Italic hills, encounter certain ruder and ruggeder stragglers from the north? —and hadn't these tall and free-stepping strangers brought with them their matriarch, the genius of their stock, a woman ancient as time and still as young as the morning, with her grey eyes and her broad square brow and her swinging tread? No doubt my ethnology is very wild, but thus it sprang into my mind and took form at the sight of the woman who approached—for whom the name of Fräulein Dahl, so flat and so featureless, seemed absurdly inadequate.

She stopped when she saw us, she stood serene and large while the little Russian dashed about her with cries and pecks. Olga hung upon her with excited endearments, with lithe gesticulations that made the new-comer look entirely like a massive and rough-hewn piece of nature, unmoved by the futile humanity that scrambles upon her breast. I really can't speak of her by the name of a middle-aged spinster from Dresden (which indeed she was); for I can only think of her as Erda, as the earth-mother of the ancient forest; and when she addressed me in her deep voice and her Saxon speech, brief and full, it was as though she uttered the aboriginal tongue of the northern twilight, the *Ursprache*

of the heroes. I ought to have answered only with some saga-snatch of strong rough syllables, like the clash of shield and spear beneath the spread of the Branstock; and as I couldn't do this, and my poor little phrases of modern politeness were intolerably thin and mean for such an encounter, I must own that my conversation with Erda didn't flourish, and I had mainly to look on while Olga, not troubled by my scruples, clawed and dragged her into the fever of our degenerate age. Think of Erda clutched by the skirt, pecked with familiar kisses, haled out of the forest into the presence of Teresa and Berta, where they sit on their dust-heap and wave their black gloves in a voluble argument, the heat and the flies having by this time fretted their tempers and considerably flawed, it would seem, their joy in the freedom of the country. But nothing can disturb the large repose of Erda's dignity, and the groundlings of the dust recover themselves as she appears, suddenly sweeten their smiles and their voices, advance to meet and greet a middle-aged spinster from Dresden, hard-featured and shabbily clad.

It took a long while to settle how best, how with the greatest propriety and safety, to make the journey of a mile or two from the dust-heap to the height of Castel Gandolfo, where our new friend had her abode. How are we to be perfectly certain that if we drive by the highroad we shan't wish we had walked through the wood?—but before deciding to walk through the wood, let us remember that since Teresa sprained her ankle at Porto d'Anzio last summer it has never been the ankle that it was before. Emilio eagerly advised caution, caution! "Aha!" said Berta, "he knows he will be forced to carry her all day on his back, as at Porto

d'Anzio." (What a picture!) Emilio felt the heat distressingly, liberally; his gloss was already much bedimmed, he was in no case to shoulder the lovely burden this afternoon. But Erda brandished her staff and struck out for the forest, Olga fluttered after her, Mimi awoke refreshed with a sudden convulsion of black legs and flung herself in pursuit; and Teresa laughed surprisingly on a high reckless note, lunging quite vulgarly at Emilio with her umbrella, and declared herself equal to carrying *him*, if need be, " pig-a-back jolly well all the time! "—such was her phrase. This was the right vein of rollick for the adventure of a country holiday, and in this spirit we accomplished the journey, not a little elated by the sense of our ease and dash. Emilio did his best to reach our level; he stepped out vigorously, mopping his brow, and after some careful cogitation in silence he edged to my side and nudged me, pointing to Teresa and Berta where they breasted the stony path in front of us. " They are verri sporting gurls," said Emilio.

Erda guided us by winding ways to her abode—which was a great black gaunt old villa, masked by a high wall, muffled by thickets of mystery; she opened a door in the wall, and immediately the place was so grand and sad, so brave and dark, that its influence arose and hushed us as we crowded into the dank courtyard. Me at least it silenced, and I should wish to forget Teresa's remark when the door closed behind us and she felt the mounting chill of the scarred and stained old pavement beneath her tread. Erda had found the right retreat for the austerity of the poetry of her style; here she lived alone, screened from the world, musing in her big cool mind upon the processes of time. I

wanted to tell her that she had no business to admit this party of haphazard ſtarers into her privacy; for Teresa would be certain to make other remarks, like her laſt, when she tramped under the vaulted entry and climbed the bare ſtone ſtairway and beheld the heroic emptiness of the great saloon. She made many indeed; but Erda's far-away smile passed over our heads, and you could see that it wasn't a few bits of trash like ourselves, idly invading her ſanctuary, that would profane the height of her solitude. For my part I ſtrayed about the great saloon, looked from the windows at the shining view of the broad Campagna, tried not to liſten to Olga's polyglot chatter—and wondered how this singular being occupied herself in her lonely days. For after all she was a German spinſter, a ſtranger and a pilgrim like the reſt of us; and one ought to be able to picture the detail of her life as she lived it, between the azure bowl of the Alban lake behind her and the silvery plain in front, inſtead of surrendering the impression to the romance of the ancient poetry she had brought with her from the north.

She appeared to have brought nothing else. The great room contained no personal trace of her whatever, nothing but a few old chunks of furniture that were evident relics of the noble owners of the house. On the walls there were pale veſtiges of feſtal painting, on the chairs and tables there was a glimmer of exhauſted gold; and there was nothing else, not a ſtick, not a crock, to ſuggeſt that a ſtranger had arrived to take possession of the paſt. The woman from Germany ſtood in the middle of the wide floor, diſtantly smiling; and she filled the space like a monument, with a grand pervasion of her presence, a diſtribution of her authority—so that she

seemed to inhabit the amplitude of her retreat, to populate it, even though she had never sat down in one of the gilded chairs, never written a line or opened a book there, never put the room to any of the common uses of life. If I tried to imagine how she employed herself when she was alone, I could only see her still standing there in the midst, smiling out of her big tolerant serenity, while the evening darkened and the night shut her in with her secret thoughts. I wonder what they were. There seemed to be all the simplicity of the world in her air and poise—and deeps of old wisdom too, full of such long and wild experience as would trouble the repose of most of us; but *she* didn't care, the memories of the dark forest and the fighting men and the clashing assemblies had never disturbed her secular dream; and now at last, driven from the haunts of her tribe, she had found a place empty and large enough to contain her for a few centuries more, perhaps, till the vulgar invasion becomes too much for her even here—and I should like to know where she will then betake herself. And what would she think, meanwhile, if she guessed how my fancy had transformed a plain and elderly Saxon, living for her convenience in a fine old villa near Rome?—for she had no romantic view of herself, she saw her own image as unceremoniously, I am sure, as any of the trivial starers might see it, who for the moment were making free with her domain.

She really was, however, more splendid than she knew; and it can't be denied that a truly intelligent inspiration had brought her to the fine old Roman villa. The empty shell of the grand style, so long abandoned, was the one place in the world for her; for she needed greatness and grandeur, and she couldn't have found

either among the tattle and the comfort and the sentiment from which she had escaped; and she needed desolation, a faded grandeur, a dilapidated greatness, secure from the smart uneasy assertion of our own age's ridiculous attempt to be magnificent. Erda was surely the most peculiar of all the Roman pilgrims I encountered; she had come to Rome because it is big and bare—and yet not inane, not dumb to reverberating echoes, like the mere virginal monstrosity of untrodden lands. The echoes of the great saloon were innumerable; old festivities, old revelries creaked and croaked in it above a droning and moaning undertone in which I could distinguish, with a very little encouragement, the most awful voices of lust and hate and pride. Erda had only to stand still and silent in the evening gloom to discover that she had the company of all the passions that had clashed about her in the time of the heroes; she felt at home there, no doubt—she couldn't have endured an atmosphere soaked in the childish spites and jealousies of the present. Yes, she was rightly installed and lodged—and let that be enough for us; I check the trivial curiosity that sets me wondering how she really existed, how she came by the possession of the strange old house, how long she had lived there.

Oddest and unlikeliest of all, if it comes to that, is the fact that Olga and Teresa should have had the entry of her solitude, should be cackling in unconcerned familiarity beneath her smile, should be putting her foolish questions which I try to disregard. I hadn't the least intention of asking them how they had made the acquaintance of the earth-mother; I didn't want to know, for example, that when she first came to Rome she had dwelt for a time in Olga's dishevelled boarding-house;

and you never can tell, if I should press too closely I might be met with nonsense of that kind. I much prefer to stand apart, in the embrasure of one of the high windows, and to notice how flat the thin shriek of these women was falling in the vacancy of the saloon. No wonder Erda could afford to smile. With one turn of her hand she could have bundled the whole party out of her sight and her mind; I never so clearly saw the contrast between the real person, standing square upon her feet, and the sham, drifting and pitching helplessly because it hasn't the human weight to hold it to the ground. Even Emilio, who had seemed weighty enough as he trudged and mopped himself in the forest-path, had now shrunk to a ducking deprecating apologizing trifle to whom nobody attended. The women indeed maintained their flutter and gibber unabashed; but their noise didn't even reach to the great ceiling of the room, it broke up and dropped in mid-air; it utterly failed to mingle with the real echoes of the place, deeply and hoarsely speaking above our heads.

There now, however, when we had quite given up expecting her, arrived Miss Gilpin. She appeared in the doorway and she stopped on the threshold for a moment, collecting the eyes of the company before she made her advance. She was a trim little woman, not very young, but with an extremely pretty head of fox-brown hair; and with a graceful gesture of both hands she sang out a greeting to us all, at a distance, in a small tuneful voice, standing where the light fell upon the bright coils of her hair; and with her arms still wide she tripped along the floor to join our party, giving a hand here and a smile there in a sort of dance-figure of sweetness and amiability—pausing finally, before me the

stranger, with a kind little questioning smile, while she waited and looked to Erda for an introduction. You haven't forgotten, perhaps, that Miss Gilpin had a certain reputation of pride; and indeed she was a public celebrity, for she was the authoress of books, of several books, though she didn't rely upon these for her effect on entering a room. Her mazy motion and her hair and her gracious ways were enough for a beginning, let alone the flattering charm of her inclination when I was duly presented. She pressed my hand as though to say that already she marked me off from the rest of the company—whose second-rate mixture we could both appreciate, she and I; but for her part she didn't mean to be wanting in civility to the good souls, and so—"Cara mia!—che piacere!—dopo tanto!"—she warbled her cries and beamed and inclined her head in a manner to make everybody feel exceedingly plain and coarse.

The finest instrument of her superiority, could the rest of the company perceive it, was her Italian accent. It was probably lost on them, but it did all its execution on me. She continued to talk Italian, though Teresa plumped out her rich-vowelled English in return, and though Erda disdained the use of any speech but her elemental Gothic. Miss Gilpin's Italian, you see, was remarkably perfect; her intonation had the real right ringing edge to it, which you don't often hear upon English lips. She pounced upon the stresses and bit off the consonants and lingered slidingly upon the long vowels—but I needn't describe it, you easily recall the effect, and the point of it was that she had acquired it all by her taste, by her tact, by her talent—not merely because she couldn't help it, rubbing against the

language all the time (like Olga or Teresa) in the middle-class tagrag of the town. To me at least the distinction was very clear. Poor old Teresa, with her English airs, betrayed herself by the genuine slipshod of her swift Roman interjections, now and then, aside to her niece or to Emilio; she would mumble or hiss out a word or two in which there was no mistaking the carelessness of the native. Miss Gilpin, exquisitely intoning her lovely syllables, had none of the smirch of professionalism; she seemed to bring the language of Dante into the drawing-room of a princess—and yet she was just a clever little English lady, smart and pretty and well-bred, and you couldn't for a moment suppose she was anything else.

She was the authoress of several cultivated and charming works, so I have always understood, in which Italian history and Italian landscape were artfully blended—her art showing peculiarly in this, that her gush of romance (over the landscape) was redeemed from weak femininity by her scholarship, while her severity and soundness (over the history) was humanized by her descriptions of peasant life, village humours, parochial ceremonies; and so you learned about the popes and the great ladies of the Renaissance, and at the same time you slipped unawares into the very heart of the old unspoilt enchanting country, the real Italy—or perhaps I should put it the other way round, the vintage and the white oxen and the kindly old village-priest coming first, leading you easily onward and upward to the very heart of the Renaissance. Anyhow Miss Gilpin had her note, and I believe she struck it to considerable applause. But she didn't assume the style of a woman of letters—in this matter too there was nothing professional about

her. She was still the Englishwoman of good connexions, who happened to be related by marriage or even friendship to two or three of the most splendid houses of Rome—but who wore this accidental embellishment very simply, just as a matter of course, needing no words—and who lived by herself, lived daintily on small means, lived in Italy because she loved the dear villagers and the white oxen; and when you had taken in all this, she had still in reserve the telling fact that she wrote these remarkable books, the kind of books you wouldn't expect from an elegant little Englishwoman of the Alban hills—or indeed from a woman at all, considering their scholarly and manly style; so that she beats the professional literary hack upon his own ground without making a parade of it—showing up his assumptions and pretensions rather cleverly, don't you agree? There were plenty of people who *did* agree, and who told her so; and altogether Miss Gilpin, living amusingly and unconventionally in the Alban hills, might be thought to enjoy a happy and original position in her world. Erda was one of the quaint impossible friends that dear little Nora Gilpin always managed to unearth, with her talent for discovering interest where other people would fail to notice it.

Behold Miss Gilpin, then, seating herself at ease in one of the great gilded arm-chairs and making a circle around her of Minna Dahl's yet more impossible, frankly impossible, rout of acquaintance; though it happens that among them to-day is an awkward young Englishman, looking very much out of his place and apparently with nothing to say for himself, who isn't quite the kind of thing that Minna generally produces on these occasions. (Yes, in Miss Gilpin's company

I am reduced to giving Erda her own poor name.) An eye may be kept upon the young Englishman—Miss Gilpin will have a word with him before she goes. For the present she rustles and warbles, settling herself in the cardinal's chair; and she sends Emilio on an errand for something she has left below, she remembers a question she particularly wished to ask Madame de Shuvaloff (how lucky a chance!), she places Berta at her side, not noticing the slight defiance in Berta's attitude, with a little friendly tap; and here is a pretty group, gathered and constituted all in a minute, to brighten the blankness of Minna's gaunt unhomely drawing-room. For indeed the dark saloon of the historic passions had become a drawing-room at once; Miss Gilpin, as she sat there, had somehow given it the clever touch that makes a room personal, individual, a part of yourself—the touch that is so slight, though it achieves such a difference. How is it done? She simply pushes a chair or two, breaking their rigid rank, she lays her handkerchief on the bare table and casually throws her moss-green scarf over the back of an angular couch; she draws Berta on to a low stool beside her (Berta's face was a study indeed), she raises her eyes with a clear gaze of thanks to the cavalier who returns with her tiny embroidered bag; and the proud old room seems to have surrendered to her charm, adapting itself to her, attentively serving to accommodate her friends and her scattered possessions. Poor Minna Dahl, she is strangely without the knack of making a place comely and habitable.

But Minna Dahl, for a woman like Miss Gilpin, is refreshing in her singularity; that is the secret of dear Nora's odd friendship for this uncouth and unlovely

German whom she has picked up somewhere in her neighbourhood. The lone German, with her offhand manners and her dreadful clothes, makes a pleasing change for a creature so compact of civilization as Miss Gilpin. Ah, there are times when we are sick of culture, bored by style, exasperated by the finer feelings; and then the relief, the repose in the company of somebody who never reads, never feels, never questions—who exists in placid contentment like a natural fact, like a tree in the solid earth! Miss Gilpin could tell you that after visiting Minna she returns with the sense of having spent a fortnight alone by the sea-side; she goes home to the world, to her book and her style, invigorated by great draughts of quiet weather, her imagination laved by the soothing surging monotony of the ocean tides; these are her very words. She could also tell you that Minna's abysmal ignorance of the Italian Renaissance, and Minna's atrocious Italian accent, and Minna's failure to obtain the least little footing in the splendid houses of Rome—Miss Gilpin could tell you (but these are not her words) that by all this too she is very considerably fortified as she trips home to tea. For the fact is that Miss Gilpin is *not* as young as she was, and the reviewers are less respectful to her scholarship than they used to be, and perhaps she begins to be aware that she mustn't visit the Marchesa and the Principessa *too* often in these days; and so, and so, as Miss Gilpin flutters away to her solitary chair by the evening lamp, she quite congratulates herself on the rare chance of a quiet time with her work, snatched from the claims of the world—which wasn't the way she had put it when she set out, rather wearily, to call on old Minna this afternoon. Who then shall grudge her the strength she is imbibing

at this moment, while she dismisses Emilio with a smile and repeats (in her pure intonation) a phrase that Minna has just mangled in her strange Teutonic Italian?

Mimi, the horrid child, had been misbehaving again in some way, and she and her mother had been fighting it out, and Minna had serenely interposed and excused the child—"In somma, non è un gran che," said Minna with her *bocca tedesca*; and then, chiming upon the air, the same words tinkled like silver bells from the mouth of Miss Gilpin—with a difference that can't be written in print, though it yawns to the ear as the distance between the Altmarkt and the Piazza del Popolo. Miss Gilpin perhaps hadn't done it on purpose, but the effect was to bring the eyes of Erda (Erda once more!) largely sweeping round upon her, with a gleam of amusement under which Miss Gilpin for an instant faltered. Erda towered above her, good-humoured, ironic, solid; and Miss Gilpin had the sudden misgiving (how well I know it) that she was being watched by a dispassionate onlooker. She sat enthroned in her chair of state, with her satellites and her litter of possessions about her; and Erda stood dispossessed in the background, claiming no rights in the place or the scene; and yet that passing glimpse of Erda's amusement disarranged the plan, and a wan chill for a moment blenched the satisfaction of Miss Gilpin. Oh, it was nothing, it vanished—at least it vanished for Miss Gilpin; she was herself again, she held and graced the situation. For me, however, it was enough to restore my Erda to her predominance—or rather to reveal that she had never lost it. To suppose that little Miss Gilpin could really install herself in the empty seat of grandeur, fill it with her fine shades

and her diminutive arts! Erda is still there, massive in her simplicity, knowing no arts, needing none.

To me it was a relief, I must say, when at last Miss Gilpin broke up the party and we streamed forth again into the brilliant evening. Erda dismissed us all with a deep farewell at the gateway, leaving us to face the renewed problem of the path, the fatigues of the journey, the tram that we should probably miss, the train of which Emilio had forgotten the hour. Miss Gilpin hastily made off to her own abode, near by, waving a light loose invitation to us all to visit her there " next time," and annoying Berta extremely by disappearing before she could have observed the very guarded manner of Berta's reply. " She won't see *me* there in a horry," said this young woman with proper pride. Mimi refused to walk another step, Olga stormed, Emilio spread his hands and shook his fingers in a wrangle with Teresa over his forgetfulness; and so we proceeded to the tram and the train and the scramble of our fretful times. But for my part I carried back to Rome a vision that I kept securely and that is still before me: Erda closing the gate behind us, Erda remounting the black stairway and re-entering the solitude of her great room, Erda standing there in the middle of it, all by herself, never moving, while again the old night rolls in upon her from the dead plain.

X. VIA SISTINA

MISS GILPIN, BEFORE SHE FLED, HAD duly taken the measure of the awkward young Englishman; a probing question or two had given her all the insight she required. And the consequence was that a very little later, when she happened to be spending a day or two with some friends in Rome, I was summoned to present myself at their apartment in the Via Sistina. I had an idea that this was decidedly an upward step for me. Miss Gilpin's level, as I understood it, was a higher than I had touched as yet, and I set off in response to this call from the Via Sistina with some complacency. It was only a few days ago, after all, that I had drifted to the Fountain of the Tortoises in the condition of a mere romantic waif, knowing nobody, knowing nothing of the true life of the real Rome; and now the shut doors were opening, I had passed within, I had my own Roman circle like Deering himself. I watched a British family-party issuing from their hotel in the Piazza di Spagna for the sight-seeing of the afternoon—I watched them with amused supremacy. They whispered to each other, noticing me, that I was evidently an old hand, a familiar resident; or if they didn't I whispered for them—and so sympathetically that I was quite flattered by the respectful envy of their tone. The next moment I was face to face with Deering himself; he was being besieged, as it chanced, at the foot of the Spanish Steps, by those dreadful little boys in velvet breeches and matted curls of whom we had spoken the other day.

He was vexed that I should see him at this disadvantage. The little beasts, they were treating him as

they treat the common tourist; they hadn't noticed the extreme Romanism of his hat. Deering vilified them most idiomatically, but they had no sense of style. The right way with violent children is more universal, I think; it applies to them all and everywhere, if you have the command of it; but Deering was singularly helpless, and the children bothered and clung to him, recognizing their prey. When at last he had beaten them off he was greatly ruffled, and he snapped at me rather pettishly, demanding to know where I came from and was going. That was easily explained; but how could I account for the presence of Deering on the Spanish Steps, in the thick of the rabble of the English ghetto? We mounted the splendid flight, evading a courteous gentleman who merely wanted us to look, for he said so, at a remarkable collection of mosaic jewelry which he happened to be carrying in a cabinet under his arm; Deering winced at his approach and answered me with raised voice in Italian. His pretty hands danced before him in the urgency of his surprise, his amusement, at finding himself in these haunts of the simple Briton; it took him back, he said, to the days of his innocence; and it flashed upon me that Deering had now turned yet another corner of his emancipation—the newest and latest perversity, perhaps, was to throw over the marble halls of the Via Nazionale and to come round again to the tea-room of the English old maids at this end of the town. The rate at which Deering refines upon refinement is bewildering to a plain man. But no, Deering hadn't pursued his culture to this point as yet, though no doubt he would arrive there in time; it was just an accident that had led him into the neighbourhood of the tea-room this afternoon.

And a lucky accident too—for I was pleased to tell Deering how I had followed the thread which he had placed in my hand the other day. "My poor friend," he said, "how you have bungled it! Is it to this that I have brought you?" He warned me that I had missed my opportunity, he wasn't responsible for my floundering plunges. Yet he bade me proceed, and he should look on from a distance and mark the progress of my madness. "Return to me," he said, "when you recover your senses." Madness, he plainly indicated, lay in the direction of Miss Gilpin and the Via Sistina; the coils of the friends of Miss Gilpin, once they have caught an imprudent explorer, effectually destroy his chances of attaining to—well, to what? If Deering is going to start his old refrain about the "real Rome" I have now my answer; I have discovered this much at least, that there are many more "real Romes" than are dreamed of in his preciosity. Already a dozen people, I assured him, had opened my eyes to the reality of Rome; some said it no longer existed, some said it was a very poor affair, some said it was a secret only known to themselves; but they all had their views, and I didn't yet feel able to discriminate finally, to determine which of them was in possession of the truth. I must go forward and hear more; and I promised to let him know when I came to a conclusion. "Go your way by all means," said Deering, "and come and tell me when you escape." So we left it at that, and we parted at the head of the magnificent stairway; Deering carried his swaying grace (but he *was* developing plumply, I observed as he went) towards the gardens of the Pincio, and I turned in the other direction down the narrow switchback of the Via Sistina.

These friends of Miss Gilpin occupied a dim and constricted apartment, and they too were rather dim. They were English, they consisted of husband and wife and daughter, and they disappointed, I must own, my idea that I had ascended the scale of initiation when I reached their door. Mr. and Mrs. Clarkson, Miss Agnes Clarkson—you can't make much of a romance out of names like these; you must take them as you find them, wan respectable gentle-mannered Britons, who had been spending the winter in the south because Mr. Clarkson has a delicate chest. They had found the winter colder than they had expected, and perhaps they had found it long. Rome is delightful, is wonderful, is full of beauty and instruction—Mrs. Clarkson, hooking comfortably at her crochet, entirely recognized this; but then so much of its beauty, and practically all its instruction, is too bitterly cold in the winter season for Mr. Clarkson's chest; and no, they hadn't been able to go about very much, or indeed at all, though they had enjoyed their walks upon the Pincio; and their rooms were excellent, all they could desire, but Mrs. Clarkson, as she leaned uncomplainingly against the rococo spikes and jags of her chairback, was bound to say that a hired apartment was never the same as one's home—great indeed as is the privilege and pleasure of foreign travel. Mrs. Clarkson had on the whole no more to say, but her husband took the view that the winter was over now, and he mentioned that he was thinking out an excursion or two for them to make before they returned to England; and as for Miss Agnes Clarkson, a hollow-cheeked maiden with a suffocated voice, she really had nothing to say at all, beyond reminding us that it would soon be too hot for

sight-seeing in comfort. Dimness seemed indeed to settle upon us all, and we scarcely knew what to talk of next.

But this was in the absence of Miss Gilpin, who happened to be out when I arrived. The door presently opened, and the flimsy draperies were caught aside by Miss Gilpin's hand as she peeped into the room with a little air of coyness and archness—I don't know why, unless because it was one of her methods of entering a room, and she thought this one as good as another. She floated in on a waft of sweetness and light, followed by a gentleman. "More company for you," she exclaimed—"I've brought Mr. Bashford!" She stood aside, directing Mr. Bashford, installing him in the circle with proprietary gestures and cries; and she reached out back-handed to me as she did so, pacifying my impatience till she could give me her attention. The Clarkson family were roused, a faint warmth kindled their chill. "Why, father," said Mrs. Clarkson, "you remember Mr. Bashford—he came here when Miss Gilpin was with us the last time." "To be sure, to be sure—we are quite in society when Miss Gilpin is with us!"—and Mr. Clarkson amiably bestirred himself to meet the incursion of the world. Agnes swept her mother's work-basket out of a chair, her father's patience-cards off the table; she ministered as she could, but society seemed to disregard her. She fidgeted round the room, disturbing the thin litter of home-life which they had sprinkled over the alien bedrock of the Via Sistina—very thin and sparse it was, easily swept into a corner with a few English volumes from the circulating library. Within five minutes of the departure of the Clarksons every trace of their settle-

ment in the south could have been obliterated; you wouldn't have supposed that the Clarksons belonged to a conquering race. But they were grateful, it seemed, for the brightening of their dimness; if they couldn't do much for themselves, they were glad to be taken in hand by their brilliant friend.

Their brilliant friend was aware of it. Miss Gilpin was now free to encourage the shy young man she had run across at Castel Gandolfo; she beckoned him into a corner and soon put him at his ease. Miss Gilpin is known for her cleverness in drawing out shy young men and winning their confidence; it is an art that perhaps you don't usually associate with little literary ladies of a certain age, and that is just what makes it so pretty and so clever in Miss Gilpin. She does it with all the naturalness in the world—you mustn't imagine that she makes a foolish affectation of youth, of playfulness, or that she vulgarly uses her charm. No, her manner is brisk, sensible, downright—but I needn't dwell upon it at this juncture, for she had no difficulty with the present young man. She made short work of me; having tamed and civilized and made me presentable within five minutes, she returned to the Clarksons and sought to create a circle of general talk. The poor Clarksons, they couldn't be left longer in their helplessness; their charming friend must give them the support of her social ease. But Miss Gilpin really used more tact than they needed, for the Clarksons were talking away quite gaily with Mr. Bashford. They were talking about a family whom they had met last winter at Torquay, nice kind quiet people, to whom it most oddly appeared that Mr. Bashford was related. "Do you hear that, Agnes?" cried Mrs. Clarkson, "Mr. Bash-

ford is a cousin of the Marshams." Why, how small the world is! Agnes had seen a great deal of the Marshams at Torquay, and it was worth while having come to Rome, she seemed to imply, for the unexpected chance of talking about them to a friend and a cousin. "Have you heard from them lately?" she asked—it might have been the first question she had asked in Rome with a sincere interest in the answer. Miss Gilpin even spoilt things a little by her intervention; Mrs. Clarkson had dropped her crochet to tell Mr. Bashford about a drive she had taken with Mrs. Marsham last winter, but the story faltered and the hooking was resumed before the competent sweep of Miss Gilpin's tact. She was so brilliant that it became rather dull and dowdy to talk about the Marshams.

Mr. Bashford, however, was not to be discouraged; he chanced to have received a letter quite recently from his cousins, and he was anxious to tell Miss Agnes that they had this year selected Bournemouth for their winter retreat, and had there been enjoying the best of weather. "Do you hear that, mother?" exclaimed Miss Agnes; "the Marshams have been at Bournemouth." The Clarksons, very remarkably, had themselves been at Bournemouth the year before last, and Mr. Bashford really envied them the experience. Mr. Bashford was not noticeable in appearance, at least upon the golf-course at Torquay; though for the streets of Rome he was perhaps too weather-bronzed, too tawny-haired, too baggy in his homespun clothing. One may well wonder how it happens that Mr. Bashford, who certainly hasn't a delicate chest, can have strayed so far from the first green at Bournemouth in this fine spring weather. He and Mr Clarkson are there again, it seems, as they fall

into an absorbing discussion of the merits of the course —Mr. Bashford knows it well, having played many a round there a few years ago. "Now they're off!" says Mrs. Clarkson, smiling over her hook; and she too, good soul, might be seated in her corner of the ladies' drawing-room at the Sea View Hotel, while she tranquilly enquires of Miss Gilpin whether she isn't badly "wanting her tea." Mr. Bashford, in short, had made the Clarksons feel thoroughly at home; the long chill of the Roman winter was a thing of the past, they breathed the kindly and temperate air of the Marine Parade. Mr. Bashford, you may judge, was just such another poor wandering exile, driven by mischance into a region where the servants simply can't, with the best will in the world, learn how to serve an English tea—Mrs. Clarkson protested feelingly that *she* had done what she could to teach them, and in vain.

But no, the story of Mr. Bashford was not such as you might suppose. Later on I learned it, and I found to my surprise that this golfing gossiping puffing Englishman, with the red face and the yellow moustache, was actually *romano di Roma* in all the conditions of his life. He had been born in Rome, he had lived all his years in Rome; he possessed by inheritance a tenement in the Piazza Navona and a farm in a valley of the Volscian hills; English weather had counted for nothing in his complexion, and to the English golf-club he had only been admitted as a holiday-making stranger from foreign parts. He was the son, I discovered, of a certain mid-Victorian amateur of the arts, an independent gentleman of some quality, who had been an early and earnest disciple of the eloquence of Ruskin. Mr. Bashford the elder had followed the teaching of his master with zeal,

but not blindly—for it must be allowed that Ruskin fell away from the gracious culture of his prime into many a harsh extravagance of taste and doctrine. It was to the *true* Ruskin that this disciple remained himself ever true: Ruskin whom one pictures, a grave and blue-eyed young man, stepping out into the early summer morning of a little Tuscan town to set up his easel in a deserted sacristy, an echoing cloister—where he will work through the long hours with piety and concentration, glorifying the beauty that a simple industrious God-fearing peasantry (if only they would bear it in mind) may always possess and impart to a man of feeling, trained among the refining influences of Gothic architecture at Oxford. I am not, if you please, describing Ruskin, but I am describing him closely as he appeared to an earnest disciple (with a delicate chest) in the sixties of the nineteenth century. This was the devotee who settled in Italy—"whether" (as he puts it in his diary) "for health's sake or for love of St. Ursula I know not"—settled in Italy with a wife ("my entirely precious and meek-eyed Dora," says the same document), and there became responsible for the gentleman who at this moment is observing to Mr. Clarkson that he has found it advisable to use an iron upon the fourth tee at Ilfracombe.

Ruskin and St. Ursula—Italy, my Italy—the ineffable meekness of dear old Brother Angelico: by names, by phrases of this kind I suggest the atmosphere that was about the cradle of Mr. Bashford the son. But human children, we know, have long ago brought to the highest pitch the art of self-protection; and little Bashford, I dare say, was not yet weaned when he cautiously shut the doorways of his head against the assault of his

parents' enthusiasm. It was firmly done, it was final; little Bashford proceeded to grow as he pleased into the big red middle-aged Bashford who is now before our eyes. In other circumstances he might have allowed his nature to remain more plastic, at least in the cradle; but his was a special case, an English babe exposed to culture in foreign parts. There was nothing for it but to guard himself utterly and absolutely; and I think we may say that only an English babe could have carried the affair so successfully through to the end. For forty years and more an insidious culture, reinforced by the unwholesome excitement of foreign ways, had been beating upon the skull of Mr. Bashford, and all without creating the faintest disturbance within it; secure behind its powerful sutures he had lived the life of which the accidents of his birth had conspired to deprive him. He was in no position to trifle with the danger. It is all very well for people like Deering and Cooksey to allow themselves the freedom of flirtation with the spirit of Rome; they are well grounded upon their insular training and will come to no great harm. And similarly the parents of Mr. Bashford, colonists of the first generation—they could follow the siren voices unafraid, carrying with them the probity of their English birthright. It is a very different matter for their offspring, denied the advantages which they enjoyed. He, poor lamb, thrown from the beginning upon the dubious world of all that isn't English, must take his own deliberate precautions; and he doesn't hesitate, he begins in time—and at forty he will meet you in the Via Sistina with the certainty that his clothes and his speech and his colour belong unmistakably to the land in which he wasn't born.

His case, it must be owned, is more interesting than his talk. Miss Gilpin fidgeted openly and did her best to break up the alternation of leisurely anecdote into which Mr. Bashford and Mr. Clarkson had now contentedly fallen. But she had no success; she only made Mrs. Clarkson rather nervous and uneasy with her acid interjections. Dear Miss Gilpin was a little difficult in a plain household; she couldn't understand that when the men are occupied and happy it is foolish indeed to disturb them. Mrs. Clarkson, more experienced, would willingly have let them go prosing on about their games and rubbish as long as they chose; Agnes and she could sit quiet and get on with their work. But Miss Gilpin was brilliant, and to be sure they were indebted to Miss Gilpin for her attention; Mr. Clarkson forgot his bad throat when she appeared, and had been quite annoyed with Agnes for reminding him in Miss Gilpin's presence (though he had told her always to remind him) to put on his flannel chest-protector before going out. Such was the tissue of Mrs. Clarkson's thought, week in and week out, during their winter in Rome; and if I seem to be interpreting my short observation of her too freely, I can only say that her mind was an open page of very simple words. But something had to be done to restrain Miss Gilpin from interrupting poor father's favourite story of the sheep in the bunker; he had just reached the crowning point at which he broke off with a laugh and a pause before proceeding—"Believe me or not, there was the old sheep on her back in strong convulsions"—and Mrs. Clarkson positively hissed at Miss Gilpin to stop her, to detach her from the circle of the men, before she should spoil the climax with one of her tiresome clever remarks.

Mrs. Clarkson, as it happened, was too late; Miss Gilpin swept the story of the sheep off the board and resolutely placed there some livelier topic of her own.

Mr. Clarkson clutched the falling fragments of his tale and was evidently ruffled; and as for the good Bashford, he stared solidly at Miss Gilpin's challenge and made no movement to take it up. His expression, as I now watch it again, gives me the secret of his massive integrity. He looked at Miss Gilpin as I might blankly look at some diagram or equation of the higher mathematics—at something so disconnected with my being that it doesn't even rouse my curiosity. That was how Mr. Bashford saved himself from going to pieces in the climate of Rome. If you divide the world into two parts, calling one of them " my sort " and the other " not my sort," your position is unassailable; in the first case you needn't question what you know already, in the second it is no concern of yours. Mr. Bashford had been able to remain true to himself through a lifetime so unnaturally Roman because anything that wasn't " his sort " was a problem, as you might say, in the differential calculus. See him, then, regarding in that light the playful sallies of Miss Gilpin —a good little woman, no doubt, but not at all his sort; he has nothing to say to her, he doesn't attempt to find anything to say to her, he merely waits. She for her part can't bring herself to acknowledge defeat; she always thinks she may yet succeed in striking a spark out of that sleepy old Bash. " Ah, Mr. Bashford, when you look at me like that I feel as though I were indecently exposed! "—this, believe me or not, is one of her flings at his stolidity; but he takes it without the flicker of an eyelid, and he leaves it to Mr. Clarkson to find

some happy retort, as daring as her attack, yet expressed in all good taste. Mrs. Clarkson, glancing up, noted that that clever little woman had certainly a way with her; poor dear father had already forgotten that she had spoilt his story.

When at length I said good-bye to the Clarksons I didn't tell them that they had given me a new experience. It was the first hour I had spent in Rome of which I might truthfully say that I had spent it in the Sea View Hotel. In the heart of Rome our little group had gathered and talked; but with Rome all about us, jangling its bells and calling its street-cries, we had sat secluded upon a few square feet of our native soil. And did I say that the Clarkson family seemed to have entered a strange land with no conquering mien? That was a superficial judgment; for what have the Clarksons done but to change their patch of the Via Sistina into English ground?—and that so easily, so instinctively, that they are quite unaware of their own prepotency. No need for them to create their colony with laborious arts; Mr. Clarkson spreads his game of patience on the table, his wife winds her wool over a chair-back, his daughter goes out to buy a cake for tea—and the thing is achieved. True they are not as comfortable as they were at Torquay, and they miss the Marshams; but you can't have everything, and the English chemist is very obliging, and what with the English banker and the English news-agent Mr. Clarkson can always find an object for a walk. Of course if you ask *why* they have come to Rome, seeing that the Roman climate is far more treacherous than that of our nice mild "English Riviera"—well, certainly it is difficult to see how the Clarksons are in candour to answer the question. But it

isn't fair to expect them to grasp their motive and to put it into words—they are not used to being called upon so harshly. One goes to Rome for the winter because, if one has private means and delicate health, it is what one *does*; that is enough for the Clarksons. And next winter, when they are happily restored to Torquay, they will be able to tell the Marshams about the intensely interesting time they passed in Rome.

OLD MISS GAINSBOROUGH WAS STATELY and splendid; she made such an effect on me, as she sat enthroned in Bashford's big frowzy sitting-room, that I had no attention for the kindly struggles of my host in his care for my entertainment. Mr. Bashford, though perhaps suspecting that I was not his sort, wrestled for a while with his manly silence and produced a remark or two; but he was relieved to find that I was happy in watching Miss Gainsborough, and he was more than ready to relax his effort and to let me take my entertainment as I chose. So we watched Miss Gainsborough together—she was sitting at a distance, very upright on an uncomfortable bench, talking to a large untidy female who writhed at her side among the cushions of a low arm-chair. "Ah, Miss Gainsborough, you and I, as old Romans, know better than that!"—the female crooned out the words with an ecstatic lunge towards the bench. "Ah, Lady Mullinger, you and I, as old frumps, had much better hold our tongues!"—and as the answer fell with a rap upon the extended knuckles of the female I recognized my acquaintance of the other day, the day of the pilgrims in the church: Cooksey's Lady Mullinger, who had tried to arrange that helpful little tea-party for poor Charlotte. She was only for a moment disordered by Miss Gainsborough's retort; then she collected herself for a good laugh at her friend's delightful wit.

Miss Gainsborough, handsome, high-coloured, decorated with much magnificence, surveyed Lady Mullinger with a contemptuous eye. "What's the woman laughing at now?" she demanded—and her ladyship was convulsed anew. They had been talking

of some one lately arrived in Rome, to whom they alluded as Lady Vera; and it appeared that Lady Vera in the innocence of her zeal had been shocked by the language of the old Romans, such as Lady Mullinger, when they spoke of matters that to her, Lady Vera, were breathlessly sacred and august. It was the eternal game, you see, to which Cooksey had already introduced me—the game at which you score off the new-comer by your careless natural freedom in the inner ring; but Miss Gainsborough stamped on it summarily—not, I judge, because she had any objection to it herself, but because Lady Mullinger was a fool and needed a smacking. The annoying part of it was that the more she was smacked the louder she cackled. "For the Lord's sake sit up and behave yourself," cried Miss Gainsborough; and she called across the room—"Bashford, come and see if you can make her sit quiet and not guffaw like a jackass whenever I open my mouth!" Bashford, rosily perturbed, got up and planted himself before Miss Gainsborough; he seemed to have some idea of protecting Lady Mullinger, but he couldn't do much for her with the other lady's daunting eye upon him; he made vague noises of remonstrance and hoped for the best. "Speak up," said Miss Gainsborough; "be a man, Bashford, and tell her to behave like a reasonable creature!"

Lady Mullinger was indeed deplorable; she writhed, she quaked with obsequious enjoyment; nothing could discourage her ecstasy, not even the fact that her witty friend, addressing herself to Bashford, completely ignored it. Bashford was prudent, but he faced Miss Gainsborough squarely, masking his dread of her with his burly solemnity; she heckled him sharply and

shrewdly, not without humour; and Lady Mullinger hung upon the spectacle, industriously applauding unnoticed—except that Bashford now and then, as an honourable and mannerly host, tried to hand her some little share of Miss Gainsborough's attention to himself. But you can't help a woman like Lady Mullinger to save her face; she is driven to expose her indignity, do what you will. I take it that in spite of many years of sedulous Romanism she was still beating blindly against the wall of that impregnable fortress of the "old Roman"; and just as she always hoped to entice Father Holt some day to her tea-party, so she couldn't be reconciled to the sight of Miss Gainsborough chuckling, grandly carousing, digging Mr. Bashford in the ribs with imperious freedom—and turning her straight back upon Lady Mullinger as though she didn't exist. Poor soul, I thought of her comfortably gossiping with Cooksey the other day—what a pity it seems that she and Cooksey can't acquiesce in their prime disability and console each other, without breaking themselves upon the fortress. Their disability is of course the fact, never to be lived down, that only an inspiration and a conviction and an enthusiasm brought them to Rome; they weren't in any way (there are more ways than one) born there.

It seems unfair, but it can't be helped; Lady Mullinger had better have turned her back (her round and wriggling back) upon Miss Gainsborough and gone off to her pleasant game of tattle with Cooksey. For Miss Gainsborough was as hard as a rock; she was one of the old guard, possessing hereditary rights in Rome that had been bequeathed to her, with the bone of her nose and the slash of her tongue, by I don't know how many stubborn generations of antiquity in the midland shires.

You could note them in the insolence of her eye, in the depth of her riotous chuckle, in the coarse old provinciality of some of her tones. She stood upon the pyramid of her fathers, a last survival—terribly out of date in a world where there are fewer and fewer people to whom we may safely be rude. Miss Gainsborough's grandmother, perhaps, may have trodden upon the necks of freeborn men and women to her heart's content; and it must be bitter to her granddaughter to reflect that at *her* end of time she is reduced to pounding an occasional old goose like Lady Mullinger. Such a triumph is too easy—it is beneath her; and yet I suppose we can hardly expect that Miss Gainsborough, with so much fighting bullying blood in her clear cheek, should hold her hand and soften her tongue when Lady Mullinger comes cringing to meet the attack. As a matter of fact Miss Gainsborough didn't bother her head about this question, or indeed any other; she inherited her stinging hand and her few tough stalwart opinions, and she gave you either or both in the face if you showed a sign of weakness.

Bashford was horrified, but not weak; he received her rich old banter with a smiling front in silence; and in large silence he still attended when she presently dropped her sportive play and took up some subject of the moment, some dire political portent that she had detected in the newspaper of that morning—over which she was implacable in majestic wrath. It mattered little to *her*, an old woman who would soon be safe with her fathers, rest their souls!—but Bashford, a mere youth, would live to see the fulfilment of her word; and her word, smartly rattling among the tea-cups, was Damnation! Nobody listened to *her*, nobody cared; and the

mad infatuation of a crowd of sheep, of swine, of serpents—oh you may laugh, but Miss Gainsborough will call them all the bad names she can think of; and when the crash comes you will remember that *she* wasn't afraid to speak her mind. Afraid? Well, Miss Gainsborough hadn't after all a great deal to be afraid of, it occurred to me; she sat pretty comfortably entrenched within her fortress, hurling her defiance at a world which couldn't touch her; and the shy observer who was watching her from across the room was almost moved to a desperate rejoinder, something to the effect that she hadn't perhaps considered an argument which the young observer could have expounded with persuasive force, with reason invincible. Shyness saved me, I am glad to think, from the fatuity of offering reason and persuasion to Miss Gainsborough—as though she bothered her head about the why or the wherefore of the opinions that she brandished. They were solid in the hand, they had seen good service and hadn't failed her; so she laid about her vigorously, like her fathers before her. Lady Mullinger, struck solemn by the thought of the world's insanity, fervently breathed her assent; and Bashford too was very grave—he feared, so he said, that Miss Gainsborough was only too much in the right of it.

I sat as it chanced by a low window, and a turn of the head gave me a view of half the long length of the Piazza Navona—the old circus or race-course or whatever it was in ancient days. The oblong space with its rounded end—it shows you the line where the Roman chariots traced and raced; for when the games of imperial Rome were over, the track was built about with houses, and now there is a palace on one side, and a church, and three great splashing fountains down the middle; and still

the sweep of the track is marked by this open space in the midst of the city, and Bashford's apartment was like the royal box for the monarch and his minions and his dames. Bashford could hardly sit for the monarch, nor I for the minion; but his dames, one of them at least, might look over the heads of the crowd, surveying the contest, and never be known for an intruder from other lands and times. Miss Gainsborough would have figured admirably upon the scene; and it seemed the waste of a great opportunity that the empress should be here, and the race-course—and yet no crowd, no chariots, only the Piazza Navona sleepily resting and lounging in the hot afternoon. Miss Gainsborough has come too late; the force that she wields has no meaning, no purchase upon the madness of to-day—it has no terror for the Piazza Navona. A few idlers were sprawling out there in the shade, easy-going children of the generation that Miss Gainsborough had chastised and warned; but it was impossible to think that a single knee would tremble if she were to appear at the window and speak her mind. The world couldn't touch her—but then the world has no will to touch her; these Roman idlers stretch their limbs in the softness of the year, smiling good-naturedly when she orders them to instant execution.

It is too true—her vigour is wasted upon Rome. She may bully Lady Mullinger; but upon Rome at large, the picture of indifference, her ancestral authority produces no impression. She might surely, however, betake herself to a country more capable of understanding her message. At this moment she happened to be lifting her voice against "that rascally feller," and again, "those good-for-nothing louts"—and the rascal

was a puzzle-headed English statesman, and the louts were a large proportion of the English race; and if Miss Gainsborough had their infamy so much at heart it seemed unfortunate that only Bashford and Lady Mullinger should have the benefit of her conviction. "True, true," said Bashford—"a bad business, I'm afraid"; and "If they could only be *told*!"—Lady Mullinger despairingly sighed. I thought I saw Miss Gainsborough seated upon the pedestal of all that had gone to produce her—acres of English soil, dozens of big stout Warwickshire land-owners, hundreds of other people's labour and fidelity: an imposing mass, not unworthily crowned by this handsome old image with the bright cheeks and the floriferous bonnet. But what was such a magnificent pile of British solidity doing in Rome, I should like to ask her—in Rome, where its effect was lost in the alien air, and where there was nobody to render it the tribute of admiration, of sacred terror, of fierce exasperation (all three) which it plainly deserved. Her Roman tea-parties could offer Miss Gainsborough no kind of justice. From Lady Mullinger she might indeed receive admiration, and from Bashford terror, and from me my little mite of silent rebellion; but I had to acknowledge that we made an inadequate show, grouped about the base of this remarkable monument. It ought to be set up in London, breasting the big rude crowd of its countrymen—not in Rome, where to the loungers of the Piazza Navona it must be meaningless.

But what far-fetched fancies to be teased with in the presence of Miss Gainsborough—who certainly felt that she had plenty of good sound meaning wherever she was. Perhaps her establishment in Rome was a stately protest

against the conduct of the louts and rascals at home; perhaps she preferred the homage of a tea-party to the jostle of a crowd; in any case she did as she chose and owed no account to anybody—least of all to an obscure young observer, hitherto barely noticed, on whom her eye now fell with a command to approach. Miss Gainsborough, I must own, could be very gracious to the young, though she was inclined to despise the shy. Youth pleased her, even awkward and inarticulate youth, and the call of her friendly sarcasm was encouraging. "Come and sit by me, you talkative young man, and don't let old Platt get near me. Bashford's expecting old Platt, and he and I always fight like the dooce. I shan't quarrel with you, because you're straight from home—Lord, I can tell that! I only get to blows with old monkeys who've forgotten *where* they came from—if they ever came from anywhere. Bashford was born in Rome, poor lamb, but he's a good lump o' home stuff for all that—look at him, with his great red face! Ho, Bashford, you're blushing at my pretty speeches, I'm sure, only it don't show on your manly bloom. When Platt comes I'm going to elope with this young man; he'll please to carry me off before I forget that I'm a lady." She tapped me impressively on the shoulder and bade me be ready to snatch her up the moment she seemed likely to lower herself by violent conduct. Lady Mullinger, who could learn nothing, crowed out on this with a joyous titter; and the moment of my privilege seemed indeed to have arrived—Miss Gainsborough's fingers twitched and tingled.

But here was old Platt; before we had noticed his entry he was bending over those very fingers, elegantly saluting Miss Gainsborough; and before she had time

to forget herself he had skilfully escaped, he was out of her reach; and she sat very stiff and haughty, her head erect, trying to pretend that she hadn't submitted to his easy liberty with her hand. She had, however—old Platt had been too quick for her; it looked terribly as though Platt, the old monkey, had caught her by surprise and compelled her to be polite to him. It was quite a humiliation for Miss Gainsborough, and I was ashamed to be aware of it. For all her magnificence a man like Platt had the advantage of her, because he was a supple and deft and nimble old wretch, versed in ingratiating arts, while she was accustomed to sit monumentally and to slash at her ease. It is the penalty that is paid by the straight-backed daughter of Warwickshire squires when she leaves her home, exposing herself to the arts and tricks of the foreigner. These outsiders don't know the rules of the game, or they deliberately flout them with their underhand craft; they won't see that the rules were laid down by the forefathers of Miss Gainsborough, and that it is not for any impertinent upstart from nowhere to tamper with what he didn't invent. So Miss Gainsborough fumed in silence; and the devoted Lady Mullinger, pursued to the last by her fatality, thought it a good opportunity to show that she too was of her dear old friend's opinion—give *her*, she said in emphatic undertones, a *man*, a *real* man, not an effeminate old thing only fit to dance attendance in a drawing-room. "My good woman," exclaimed Miss Gainsborough coarsely, "it's late for *you* to be asking for a man, real or sham. You and I must take what we can get, at our time o' life." Lady Mullinger heaved and cracked with her mirth—"Isn't she *hard* on me?" she gasped to the room. But Miss Gainsborough was

still discomfited, and she had to remain where she was; she couldn't now elope to leave old Platt with his advantage.

He was enjoying it very discreetly; nothing could be more graceful than his unconsciousness of Miss Gainsborough's glare. He hovered about the room with little shrieks of admiration at its dingy adornments, he clasped his hands and fell back in enchantment before a picture, he seized upon Bashford and tenderly slapped him—"My dear boy, *don't* look so young and so buxom; it's thoughtless and cruel of you—there!" Bashford received the dainty slap with all his sturdiness, and Mr. Platt made a pretty little face at him, pouting reproachfully; and then there were more shrieks of delight and a tinkle of laughter, for Mr. Platt had discovered a great row of briar-wood pipes, hanging in a rack on the wall, and he vowed and declared that he had *never* seen such a darling old John Bull as Mr. Bashford—there, once more! "I ought to have brought a bull-dog and a hunting-crop," he trilled playfully, "only I shouldn't know which was which—fancy if I cropped the dog instead of hunting the bull! Now go away and don't make me laugh, because I've got something dreadfully serious to say to Lady Mullinger, who's a bad bad woman—aren't you, sweet lady?"—and he skipped to her side, shaking his finger at her, and arranged himself very neatly on a stool at her feet. "Now don't listen, any of you," he cried; "it's a secret—only it isn't, for it's the talk of the town; otherwise I'd hush it up, you poor dear thing, for the sake of our past." He soothed her, patting her hand; and again he knew just how to disengage himself at the right instant, before Lady Mullinger in the surge of her agitation had time to act.

He shot a glance of knowing intimacy at Miss Gainsborough in passing, and precisely managed to evade the heart-felt oath that she barked after him as he frisked away.

This elderly sprite had no call to envy the buxom freshness of anybody; he was beautifully pink and buoyant and clear-eyed. Stout he was, but trimly and compactly stout, and his gay little feet twinkled in agile movement. He didn't remain with us for long; he *had* to tear himself away, because he was expecting two professors and a doctor of divinity under his own humble roof, and since Lady Mullinger had been untrue to him —" not that I can wonder at *that*, with a dangerous youth like Bashford "—he must trip round and beat up another pretty girl or two for his party; and as for the faithless woman herself, " Oh, my dearest Bash, be very gentle with her—she's so impulsive "; and with the flutter of a handkerchief, with chirruping cries, with pattering boots, Mr. Platt scattered his leave-taking over the company and was gone. And when he was safely outside, behind the closed door—ah, I should like to have seen him then! Did he pause and turn, did he make an odious and vulgar sign in the direction of the company ? I can very well imagine that he did so, and small blame to him. He had brought off a bright and engaging little *scena* without a hitch, in the teeth of his restive audience; and I can't believe that he wasn't deliberately playing with his skill, or that he didn't smile to himself upon the staircase, tasting the thought of Miss Gainsborough's expression upon the closing of the door. He knew what he was about.

" Huh! " said Miss Gainsborough—as nearly as I can represent her comment; and she said no more upon

that subject, she talked for a few minutes to Bashford upon other matters, and then she made an exceedingly royal departure. Lady Mullinger and I had the appearance of forming a "lane"; Bashford armed her down it and escorted her to the staircase. When he returned Lady Mullinger flounced at him with an outburst of volubility that she was now able to let loose. She wasn't afraid of old Bashford, and she relapsed into her natural exuberance, as though with the removal of a tightened belt; she fell to work with determination upon the diet that she craved. She abounded upon the topic of Platt —his origin so dubious, his history so mysterious, his connexions so questionable; Lady Mullinger, as one who never listened to scandal, knew nothing *against* the man, and of course one met him everywhere; but she had been told for a *fact* that he was involved in that horrid business of—well, you remember it, and how he had suddenly left Rome, so strangely, just before it all came out; and of course it's no secret that he stays here now because he *daren't* go home—yes, Lady Mullinger had had *that* on the best authority; and nobody hated to be censorious more than she, but in our little friendly Roman circle one must be careful; and after all what *did* happen exactly in that other affair, the affair of the sacristan and the suppressed pamphlet?—because if Bashford knew, Lady Mullinger felt that she *ought* to ask him to tell her plainly; and by this time she had quite forgotten that there was a third person present, and on the shock of accidentally meeting my interested gaze she gave a lurch and a plunge, sheering heavily aside into the reflection that for her part she liked to believe the best of everybody, and had always maintained that Mr. Platt was a very good-natured amusing old

person. And now she really must fly, with a thousand thanks to dear Mr. Bashford for his charming hospitality.

So she fled—it was a disorderly rout; and with the fall of repose and silence upon the comfortable room I began to follow. But Bashford held me; he was obscurely aware of a burden upon his mind that he wished to throw off. "Give me time," he seemed to say, detaining me with a firm broad hand. There was plenty of time, and he laboured with his difficulty unhurried. He couldn't allow a young stranger to carry off the impression that his tea-party hadn't been quite—hadn't been exactly—hadn't been what you might call—; but this line of attack led nowhere, and with the silence still unbroken he cast around for another. Every approach seemed blocked by his loyalty to his guests, but he arrived at last. "A good soul, her ladyship," said he; and then, drawing a bolder breath—"Tongue runs away with her a bit, at times." Oh, I quite understood; it may happen to any of us. "It's my belief," said Bashford, "that some people *must* have their talk—keeps 'em alive, if you see what I mean." He looked up gravely for my effusive assent and found his way now more freely. "That's what I like about old Martha Gainsborough," he reflected; "she talks very fierce, but there's no mischief about her. It's my belief that some people *will* make mischief—keeps 'em going, if you see what I mean. Now what I like about old Martha—" The circle of his locution was narrow; he was surprised to find himself at the same point again so soon. He broke away—"There's plenty of good stuff in old Martha; and that keeps *her* alive; so she's no need to pull her friends to pieces." He frowned approvingly on the phrase, and it started a smile. "Except to their

faces," he added with humour. He had brought me to the door, and he dismissed me warmly. "And mind you," he called after me, "she's a very good soul, her ladyship." I knew who was, anyhow.

XII. CORSO

THERE WAS NO DOUBT THAT I HAD climbed to good purpose when I reached Miss Gainsborough's *piano nobile* in the Corso. Here was grandeur!—such a pomp of high mirrors and gilded garlands and red brocades, such a blaze of candlelight and crystal, as gave old Martha the sumptuous background that became her. She stood on the hearth-rug, upright as ever, her hand upon the crutch of an ebony wand; she stood in all her panoply to receive the world. She was flanked by a pair of supporters, two gentlemen already in attendance; and the world approached her across a shining floor that was broad enough to make the world feel very small and trifling, or very large and uncouth, before it gained her presence. But she took my hand with kindness, though she spoke with acerbity; and she seemed to hold me under her protection, like a friend, while she presented me loftily to the gentlemen in waiting. One of these I recognized at once; he had the bright dark eyes, the musical voice, the sharp-lipped smile of Father Holt—who recalled our meeting in the church and gracefully renewed our acquaintance. The other was an old man with a great patriarchal head, snowily bearded—a picturesque old figure, bedecked in careful negligence of black velvet and creamy silk; he was very loud and deaf, and he accepted my introduction with abounding heartiness.

Miss Gainsborough was holding a banquet; and Father Holt and Mr. Vickery (the patriarch) had been retained for the occasion as a pair of faithful henchmen, who would kindly be at hand to beat off the crowd when she collapsed. She was giving them their directions to this effect when the crowd began to gather, and I own

there was some disillusionment again for me in the sight of the trio who first appeared. Miss Gainsborough's drawing-room glowed and shone, prepared for all the brilliance of a historic capital; and anybody might have felt that high expectations sagged a trifle when there presently drifted through the curtained portal the long plain faces of the Clarksons. They, poor creatures, had perhaps the same reflection, discovering me upon the hearth-rug; when for once you dine in the Corso it is flat to encounter the mere Briton to whom you have been kind in your lodging. But other faces quickly crowded upon us, and the room was filled with chatter and stir; the party was a large one, and among the gathering of many strangers Miss Agnes and I, trying to make conversation as we looked at the show, might imagine that we beheld the flower of historic pride. I at least was ready to make the most of it, for the honour of the Corso and of ourselves; but Miss Agnes blinked more doubtfully with her short-sighted eyes and appeared dissatisfied. Was it possible that old Martha was putting us off with our own sort, a rabble of floating touristry—whom she swept together and polished off from time to time with a perfunctory banquet? Yes, when a few minutes later I was sent to dinner with Miss Gadge it seemed all too probable.

How we do despise each other, we simple pilgrims! There is no meanness to which we are ashamed of stooping if only we may so persuade the rest of the herd that we are not as they, gaping in the rawness of innocent wonder. Miss Gadge and I were quite capable, I believe, of deliberately lying to each other about our condition and rank in the general pilgrimage; there was instant rivalry between us, a competition into which

we dropped as a matter of course. Even after long years it might make us both uncomfortably flush to recall the sound of our voices as we plied one another with the well-known strokes—for they are all well-known, the possibilities of the game have been ransacked a thousand times over. Not one of us all, I suppose, ever really deceived another; and yet we are unable to talk with candour and freedom—and Miss Gadge is by no means a spiritless talker—until we have paid our debt to the devouring snobbery which overtakes us in Rome. I try to smother some degrading puffs and flourishes of my own that return to me; but I may claim that no less vivid in memory are the struttings and bouncings of Miss Gadge. The game was drawn when at last we abandoned it, and we have never since had occasion to start it again. Years have flown, and if Miss Gadge and I were to meet once more at a dinner-party in the Corso we should meet as strangers; yet I can hear the insinuating tone in which she would begin by asking me whether this was my first visit to Rome. "Not quite!" I should answer, with a dangerous ironic smile; and I should allow her to commit herself further before crushing her with the load of my superiority. I should find, furthermore, that it isn't easy to crush a bouncer of such experience as Miss Gadge.

As for the particular crowd that old Martha had collected that evening, the suspicion of Miss Agnes was confirmed. We were a fortuitous lot, jetsam of the hotels and the boarding-houses, with only Father Holt and Mr. Vickery to give us a stiffening of the real Rome. They toiled, I have no doubt, manfully; but they were outside my range (Miss Gainsborough kept them jealously near herself—not that she seemed likely to

collapse), and I was plump in the midst of the conversation, everybody knows the kind, which we pilgrims make for ourselves when we assemble together. It begins with the unseemly game I have described, and when this has been played to a draw it goes on to an endless chant, recurring points of admiration and exclamation, over the churches and the ruins and the hill-towns that have stirred our gushing affections. The dear sweet places, we name them in succession; and like Berta when she grew so lyrical over Gower Street and the hansom-cabs, we hardly need more than the sweet pretty names—they are conversation enough by themselves. Hark to the swelling chorus!—our shrewd hostess knew she could trust us, her body-guard was merely for her own protection against a clack of ecstasy that bored her to death. She at her end of the table was again declaiming, arraigning, denouncing in her grandest manner; the rest of us left the world to its fate, and assured each other that Assisi—that Perugia—that Siena—needed no more words to express what we all agreed that they were. In half a dozen eager colloquies about the table this truth was upheld.

Take the case, for example—not of Miss Gadge, occupied for the moment with her other neighbour; but take the case of Miss Turnbull, who happened to have arrived that very day from Assisi, where she had spent a fortnight alone with her feelings. These, she was clear, were unutterable; but so were mine, and when we threw them together the effect was instant. "Assisi!" we both exclaimed in an outburst. Miss Julia Turnbull—she was a fair and flushed young woman of thirty; and she had travelled up and down over Italy, quite by herself, and had never had the

smallest difficulty with the Italians. Wherever she went it was the same story—nothing but perfect friendliness and delightful manners. Treat an Italian as you would treat anybody else, and he will behave accordingly—if this result of Miss Turnbull's experience seems ambiguously worded, nothing could be plainer or franker than her ringing laugh and her broad blue gaze. With these she had made all sorts and conditions of friends in her walks around Assisi; she had talked to every one she met, they told her of their joys and troubles—dear things, they seemed to feel that Miss Turnbull was akin to themselves; and perhaps there *was* something of the south, something of the soil in her—she couldn't otherwise account for it. Anyhow she had realized that it was among the peasants and the simple folk of the country, not among the professors and the theologians, that (to use her own image) one "touched the heart of things Franciscan"; and she had not only touched it, she had borne it away with her, and some day perhaps she would put it in a little book—but it would evidently take her a long while to think of the necessary words. And so meanwhile, "Assisi!"—the book, for Miss Turnbull and me, was already in the cry of the name.

"A book? who's going to write a book?"—Miss Gadge caught up the echo with a pounce. Miss Gadge was small and lean and dry, with a pair of nippers that clawed and lacerated her nose to maintain their hold against her emphatic nods and jerks. If we were talking of books we might be interested to know the name of the grey-haired lady on the other side of the table—"but don't seem to be noticing her; look presently," said Miss Gadge; and in a very unnecessary

whisper she breathed a literary *nom de guerre* of thumping circulation, I believe, in those days. That simple old lady, so unobtrusive in her plain white shawl, was *she*; and Miss Gadge was her friend and had the privilege of travelling with her on an Italian tour—a tour undertaken for a purpose that Miss Gadge oughtn't really to mention, but that she did confide to us because we were interested in books. Emmeline (so Miss Gadge referred to the authoress) had a new novel shaping in her mind, and this time she was going to "bring in Italy"; and so she had come to Italy to *take* it in, as you might say, before bringing it in—she was one who felt that a novel was only of value in so far as it was sincere. And if you have ever had the chance of watching a novelist (a sincere one) while he or she is simply waiting, imbibing and inhaling the atmosphere that is presently to be brought in—you can believe that Miss Gadge was almost afraid, at times, of interrupting the studies and meditations of her friend, lest she should mar such an exceedingly delicate process. It isn't as though it were merely a matter of taking notes and accumulating facts; Emmeline constantly remarked to Miss Gadge that it was something far more intimate that she desired. She already had her "plot" quite clear in her head—it had come to her at Bournemouth; the atmosphere could only sink in gradually, taken on the spot.

The old lady in the shawl was placidly attending to her dinner, and we could observe her without indiscretion. I had for my part a real curiosity in doing so. In those far-away years it wasn't every day that I saw a novelist, and I looked upon the mild brow of Emmeline with questioning wonder. From that smooth forehead

they had sprung, those generously passionate romances that had been considered too rich and ripe—all the men in them were "clean-limbed," all the women "deep-breasted"—for Miss Turnbull to read as a school-girl. Oh she *had* read them, you may be sure, and she warmly agreed with Miss Gadge that there was nothing in their frankness which could inflame a wholesome mind. Indeed Miss Turnbull often thought that if, as a woman grown, she possessed some power of appreciating the big things, the real things, the human things, she largely owed it to her long immersion in the romances of Emmeline. There comes a time, no doubt, when we turn to life itself, to the book of the heart, rather than to an imaginary picture of it, however sincere; a mere novel then loses its hold on us and we reach out to our kind. Yes, yes—but what so painfully impressed Miss Gadge, for one, was the vainness of our attempts in that direction; our lives are isolated, barriers divide us—I am not sure that Miss Gadge had ever been able to feel she had truly attained to the life of another, for all her striving. Ah, to that Miss Turnbull had much to say; there are currents, divinations, magnetic chords—but though there is much to say about them, it appears to be difficult to say it clearly; Miss Turnbull got entangled in the chords to such an extent that she lost her bearing in the currents. But Miss Gadge was ready with the true conclusion; in these perplexities, in these obstructions, it is the genius of the artist that will point the way. Where the rest of us fumble and hesitate the novelist marches straight; he knows, *she* knows, how to throw down the barrier and to unlock the soul. There she sits, bless her, just across the table; and if she seems to be thinking of nothing but the lobster's limb that she is

tapping and cracking so busily—type of how many a heart that she has smitten and laid gaping with her pen—one needn't doubt that she is taking in, at this very moment, more of the meaning of life than the rest of us put together. Perhaps we shall find that she has brought it in, with Italy, when we read her next.

The conversation of these ladies had joined hands across me; they were so much more familiar than I was with the hearts and chords and barriers that I could have nothing to say. But they didn't appear to get very far with the subject of their discussion; they soon managed to lose it in the difficulty of agreeing what it was. Miss Gadge thought that essentially it was the spirit in which she and Emmeline were conducting their tour; and if that were so it was obvious that Miss Gadge should first describe, without interruption, the nature and the quality of the spirit. This she was quite willing to do—taking as an illustration a day they had lately spent among the "ghosts of the centuries" (I quote Emmeline) in the Campagna; and she began the day in much detail, dwelling on the tone in which Emmeline had said of the Appian Way, "It speaks to me, it speaks to me!"—like that. But Miss Turnbull's view of the subject in hand was different; and she slanted off to *her* view by a rapid cut at a drooping youth who sat exactly opposite to me, nursing his chin in a slender and very flexible hand. "Mr. Pole, say you agree with me; say you think that on the plane of art—" Miss Turnbull was great upon "planes"; but we all know the slipperiness of that one, and she crashed heavily when the youth Pole, after listening unmoved for a minute or two, sighed out some cruel and insidious comment. Such a languorous slim-throated slender-

handed youth—he was just what Deering had planned to be, what Deering perceived that he daily more fatally failed of being; I thought compassionately of Deering as I noticed the waxen nose and the relaxed waistcoat of the youth Pole. He tripped up Miss Turnbull on her plane, gave a limpid glance at the havoc of her fall, and returned to the seclusion of his graceful attitude.

Miss Turnbull had met him at Assisi, and though she didn't think much of him as a man—he had none of the square-jawed virility of Emmeline's heroes—she was impressed by his authority as an artist. She had never seen any one who appeared to live so exclusively upon the most treacherous of all the planes; half protesting, half admiring, she acknowledged the supremacy of the feat. Miss Gadge on the other hand was so loud in her scorn that it might have flawed the Narcissus-dream in which the youth was apparently sunk—he was bending his gaze as though the loveliest of visions were reflected in the table-cloth. The disregarded nymph at his side was Miss Agnes, and it wasn't *her* poor dreary countenance, mooning over his shoulder, that would divide the attention of Narcissus; and he was equally heedless, it seemed, of the sharp word of Miss Gadge, though she flung it viciously into the mirror of his contemplation. She had no patience with these affected young men; to one who has lived in familiarity with a true artist the sight of the sham is a disgust—the nippers quivered at the thought. Emmeline often says that all great art is intensely human; she says too that every great artist is essentially a man; and Miss Gadge puts in, fondly, what Emmeline in her modesty leaves out—that a great artist is also "very woman," if that happens to be her sex. Well, it follows that a thing like *that*, limp and

boneless, soft where he ought to be rugged and square, pale where he ought to be "flushing through his tan," is a creature of a kind that Miss Gadge has such a horror of that she seems capable of actually forcing him to listen to her candid opinion. A very little more and she would have him by the slim white throat; Miss Gadge doesn't profess to be artistic herself, only to reverence the gift in others, and she is not such a very woman but that she could easily collar the fair young Pole.

Luckily there was beside her a moderating influence; her neighbour on her right was an English parson, as rugged and brown and broad-beamed a man as Emmeline could picture in her most womanly moments; and his deep rumbling laughter diverted Miss Gadge from her indignation. He was laughing at Pole, he was laughing at her too, he was laughing at everything that was too small to be taken seriously; there was drollery and laziness and potency in his laugh. He leaned back in his chair and derided Miss Gadge, and she bristled up at first with snaps and jerks; but she was a puny little being, all splutter and shrillness, in the grasp of his indolent humour, and she was very soon tittering happily at his thrusts. Was he too one of our oddly mixed pilgrimage? Miss Turnbull knew all about him, and she told me his story in an undertone of ardent admiration. All that she knew, however, cast no light on the compelling richness of his laughter—which was an attraction that held and interested me more and more as I caught the rumour of his encounter with Miss Gadge. My other neighbour's tale was of no account; it was about offices and dignities and benefices—nothing to the point; but I learned at any rate that his name was Mr. Champerdown and that he was in Italy, I think

indeed he was abroad, for the first time in his life. Ah, that gave me a sudden lift of mind, like a recollection of something forgotten. The gushing Julia, the pouncing Gadge, the drooping Pole, not to mention the neglected Agnes and the placid Emmeline, had driven something out of my thought which returned refreshingly, all in a moment, when I learned that Mr. Champerdown, with his power and his laughter, was for the first time in Rome. With a sense of satisfaction that was queer and sweet I repaired my loss.

But wait—for before I can attend to this matter our sumptuous meal is at an end, Miss Gainsborough pushes back her chair, Emmeline pops a last large chocolate into her mouth and clutches her shawl, and we stream back in procession to the crimson and golden drawing-room. Old Martha was bearing herself valiantly, and nobody could say that she denied the barbarians the best of her splendour, though her disdain might gleam in her eye. The entertainment proceeded, broke out afresh, developed and extended; old Martha controlled a shifting circle at one end of the room, Mr. Vickery displayed his roaring picturesqueness at the other, Father Holt glided and sparkled with watchful courtesy in the midst. Trays of cups appeared—and then more trays of jugs and glasses—and then of little crystal plates and dishes; there was always a tray of something delicate and charming at one's elbow to fill the pause while Mrs. Clarkson waited for one's next remark. She had to wait often and long, for she had the gift of exhausting a separate subject with each remark of her own; there was nothing to add when she had mentioned that she thought so too. She couldn't be tempted with the jugs and glasses, but she waited

calmly—she waited so mildly that I lost myself in watching a small drama, enacted in my view, and I only jumped back to her when at last she repeated that she had always thought so, rightly or wrongly. Mrs. Clarkson wasn't easily remembered from one remark to another, and it happened that the drama in question was unusual and expressive. Not many people have ever seen Father Holt at a loss; it is a rare chance, and indeed one has to be quick to seize it. He is extremely sensitive to his surroundings, very adaptable, very deft; but once in a while he is over-confident, and he makes a slip.

I need hardly say that if there was any run of mankind with whom Father Holt felt sure of himself it was the run of the Anglican clergy on a tourists' holiday in Rome. It didn't, of course, come a great deal in his way, but he might reasonably feel that he had all its few varieties by heart. He well knew the breezy tact, or the burly independence, or the shining forbearance, or the envious—but enough, he knew them all, all the tones of their response to the courteous charm of a Jesuit. He thought he knew; and as he circulated in his distinction among Miss Gainsborough's rabble he approached the broad back of Mr. Champerdown with all his ease. He rounded the back, he faced Mr. Champerdown (who was seated); he addressed him in that fine finished manner which he wore so lightly; and he didn't even pause to verify its effect, it was just a polite word in passing for the clumsy big cleric—of the breezy kind, probably, prepared with a volley of manly tact and taste that Father Holt had no wish to confront. So he turned to pass on, having made his attentive sign, and in the next moment there happened the rare chance I speak of.

A large hand, reaching out to a surprising distance, fell upon his shoulder—fell upon the whole of him, as it rather seemed, and gathered him up and drew him back and placed him where Mr. Champerdown could survey him conveniently; the thing was done so deliberately, so gigantically, so gently, that it was as though you were to screw round in your chair and to pick up a mouse or a small bird from the ground—some little unsuspecting funny creature, taken unawares, whom you had the fancy to examine more closely. With perfect gentleness Mr. Champerdown held the bright-eyed bird and inspected it—and only for an instant or two, before he set it down again uninjured. That was all he wanted—just to take a singular opportunity, the first he had had, and to see for himself what a Jesuit in a Roman drawing-room looked like in the hand. It was delightfully done, and it was over in a moment; but in that moment the expression of Father Holt was enough to make one forget a more vivid pre-occupation than Mrs. Clarkson. "Yes, always," she said, "rightly *or* wrongly"—and her neighbour manifestly jumped to overtake her mild rumination.

When at length old Martha felt entitled to put us to flight I was careful to find myself descending the great staircase at the side of Mr. Champerdown. We issued forth together into the silence of the Corso—Miss Gainsborough's portal was at the silent end of the long straight highway—and he serenely accepted my company. He pointed the way towards the Place of the People, hard by, and we walked out into the middle of the broad empty square. A night of May, a night of Rome—and moreover a night of full moonshine: the beauty of the night was too great to be praised. Two

speechless men, alone in the emptiness, stared around them at a marvel of beauty that was close to them, all but touching their eyes and cheeks—that was infinitely remote and unattainable in the height of space. It was caressing and kind—and yet it drew away and away, impalpably melting, re-appearing, receding; and at last it had led our sight further and further, this way and that, creating a void in which not only a pair of speechlessly wondering men, but the great open square itself was absorbed and lost. And then again it lay empty before us, the glimmering Place of the People, snowy in the moonlight; and we passed over and stood before the triumphal archway of the city-gate, where it rose up to breast the splendour of the May-night and of Rome. We gazed for a while, still silent, and we turned again; and now, as though we had just entered by the northern gate, the city lay before us that was the goal of our patient pilgrimage. We had reached Italy at last, and the end of the journey and the threshold of the city. My companion stopped dead, his big forehead thrown back; and he lifted his arms, he stood in an attitude of amazement, of salutation, of adoration—all that and more was in the gesture with which he acknowledged the presence of Rome. It reminded me—of what did it remind me?—of something in the Bible, in the book of the law; it was the "heave-offering," and he raised it aloft and offered it here in the night upon the threshold. "Ave Roma!"—his voice trolled out soft and profound in the stillness.

I never again saw Mr. Champerdown, nor heard of him; but before we parted that night I had welcomed and enjoyed the possession that he restored to me. It was the thought of Rome—obliterated by the voices

and the faces of the evening, and indeed of the last many days; it was the sight of the city, obscured unawares by the crowding heads of our pilgrim band. The broad shoulders of Mr. Champerdown seemed to have ploughed an opening in the throng, and there was Rome; even the mere noise of his power and humour, and the notion of his power and humour for the first time fronting Rome—this had been enough to bring out the vision again in all its force. One inevitably forgets the look of it in the jumble of our pious company; only a very few of them here and there have the faculty of clearing the way. With one of these few I had stood before the Gate of the People; and I gladly accepted, I gratefully commemorate, the help of his remarkable gift. It came just in time; for my Roman days were now running out, I should soon have to depart with whatever I could save from them; two or three more fragments thrown upon the medley of my impressions will complete the pile. But the vision of Rome was safe, ensphered in that memory of the spring-night and the moonshine—safe and secure for me to carry away when I must go.

JULIA OF ASSISI, FRESH FROM THE heart of things Franciscan, had been painfully struck by the heartlessness of Rome. In all the grandeur and the pride of the Seven Hills there is something which made her say to herself, as soon as she arrived, that it wasn't the same as Assisi—a weak phrase, but she found the right expression before long. A want of heart!—for a time she wandered disconsolate, feeling that it was no place for her. What then was delight to discover in Rome her old friend and ally Professor Minchin—a man, as I believe, of European reputation, and a man for whom Julia has one of the frankest and most gurgling of passions. See her, hear her, on a perfect morning in the Forum, as she presents him with the party she has collected for the treat of a tour, under his guidance, among the excavated ruins. He knows them intimately, from the temple to the sewer; there *is* a heart of things Roman after all, and the Professor undertakes to reveal it. Not in the great bleak galleries and the tawdry churches, but here among broken columns and crumbling masonry, still half buried in historic dust—here is that human and homely touch, or note, or message (for either word is used, if we follow Julia), which at first one took to be lacking altogether in Rome. The darling Professor had made all the difference to her enjoyment of the place; no wonder that she whinnied and panted in her enthusiasm, while she tried to keep us in a bunch and to marshal us properly for our treat.

The Professor seemed conscious of Julia as of some disturbance in the air, some unexplained flutter or flicker that confused him slightly; but he brushed it aside, he vaguely greeted the rest of us, and he flung

himself immediately into the zeal of his task. Miss Turnbull, I know, was a young woman easily ſtirred to ideal raptures, but I soon acknowledged that the Professor was irreſiſtible. He had the appearance partly of a moth and partly of a scarecrow; and the mixture, as I recall it, surprisingly gives him the likeness of a soft and ragged rain-cloud, swept by a kindly guſt. He veered at high speed across the broken floor of the Forum, and Julia had much difficulty in holding the half-dozen of us in her embrace while she trundled us after him. The Professor had his view of the particular drain or paving-ſtone where the ſtudy of Rome begins; and there was nothing for it, said Julia, but to accept his rule and to squeeze as we might into the awkward pit or cleft in which the fundamental object is to be found. "Mind the tail of your skirt, Mrs. Rollesby," cried Julia, growing heated; "there's room for Kathleen at this end, out of the puddle; wait, Professor, wait —I want Mr. Ram to hear this; really, Mr. Ram, if you crouch you can easily get in." We were a handful, but Julia kept her head; the moſt trying member of the party was the Professor, who heeded nothing but the book which he had drawn from his pocket and from which he was gleefully reading aloud—translating as he went, for it was an ancient text.

It wasn't the beſt situation for a classical lecture, and Mr. Ram, splashing in the puddle, sighed faintly in good Italian. "Per l'amor di Dio!" he murmured; he was very helpless, and the girl called Kathleen seized him with a manly arm and set him to rights on his perch. Crouching, scuffling, apologizing, we wedged ourselves about the lecturer—with sudden changes of pressure when Mrs. Rollesby leaned and peered over her

capacious bosom (she may have been one of Emmeline's heroines) to see what was happening to her skirt. Under the Professor's elbow sat a bewildered maiden with a pulled-out neck like a hen's, and she distracted the whole company by taking notes of the lecture on a little pad—scrawling down words like "republican (said to be)" and "(?) Etruscan," which we all tried to read. Julia listened fervently, her lips moving in the effort to get the message of the paving-stone by heart; and the message ran on, ran on, now translated from the ancient book, now poured forth at an amazing rate in the exposition of the Professor. He was inspired; he stood upon the mouth of the sewer (if sewer it was—"masonry doubtful (perhaps)," obscurely noted the hen-necked girl)—he stood there and flourished his book and flaunted his interpretation and ransacked the ages, casting up the history of races, of immigrations, of the colour of men's hair, of the obscenities of their religion, of the shapes of their water-pots; and he whipped open his book again and triumphantly quoted, he dashed it away to remind us of Pelasgic sources and Punic infusions and Iberian influences; and perhaps I rather recall the heads of his discourse as they reached the bewildered pad than as they fell from the Professor, but they were various and bristling and abundant; for it all came in, it all came round, it all came finally back to the stone on which Mr. Ram was trying to twist himself into a tolerable attitude without spoiling his trousers. "Ah," exclaimed Julia uncontrollably, "how one *feels* it on the very spot!" Mr. Ram seemed to think so too; he raised himself, ruefully inspecting the damp green traces it had left on the very spot. The Professor dived again into his book like a man possessed.

He kept us at last so long in our narrow pit that we must surely have laid the foundations of Rome and tunnelled its drains with all thoroughness; the notes on the pad were still dubious, but Mrs. Rollesby began to wonder if we hadn't now reached the surface of the soil—she too had taken her share of the ooze of the ages. She signed to Julia with winks and nudges—and Mr. Ram appealed to Julia with a woeful smile, to which Kathleen added an imperative frown; everybody looked to Julia to take action—everybody except the maiden with the pad, intent upon the uncertainties of learning. The Professor was Julia's property, it was for her to deal with him; and he had clearly forgotten that we were still underground, he didn't even notice that the reason why he couldn't get at the pocket in his coat-tail (he made a sketchy motion towards it now and then) was that the hen's-neck stretched in the way. We might just as well be sitting comfortably in the sun, and between her responsibility and her rapture poor Julia was flustered. "Soon, very soon—the blue-eyed infusion predominant—I'll get him to move in a moment—their pots were shallower": Julia tried to whisper encouragingly to Mrs. Rollesby without dropping the thread of the message. (I don't answer for her version of it.) But the Professor swept over her head, beaming in the zest of his approach to the real inwardness, the ultimate significance, the true truth of the origin of Rome—it appeared that we were only there, even now, and the first damp stone, so homely and said to be so Etruscan, had still to be laid. We were to stick in our cleft indefinitely, I thought, for Julia's tactful advances and coughs made no impression. The hen-necked girl scratched out "Etruscan" and wrote wildly

"theory abandoned (if at all)"; and the Professor struck her forcibly on the jaw as he flung out upon the climax, the glad surprise to which he had been gradually leading us—his discovery of the solution, the answer to all the queries of the distracted student.

"But first," he said, "I fear I must disturb you." He explained with apologies that we should be better able to judge the weight of his argument if we followed him—and he was gone, leaping to the upper air with a sudden agility that brought on one of the tiresome attacks to which Mrs. Rollesby is subject on being startled. These attacks take the form of an extraordinary surging and quaking of the bosom, and she has to be seized and supported and propelled to a spot where she can sit on something less painful than a heap of brickbats. So she says; but the girl Kathleen (who proved to be her niece) declared rather brutally that a little smart exercise would do her all the good in the world. "If she *will* gobble at breakfast she'll palpitate before lunch—naturally," said Kathleen, who was as taut and muscular as a young tree. With all this the Professor had given us the slip, our party was adrift and scattered, Mr. Ram saw a chance of escape—he feared and detested Kathleen. But Julia signalled so excitedly through a gap in some ruinous brickwork, not far off, that she drew us together again for the Professor's revelation. Mrs. Rollesby, still surging, was somehow hoisted through the gap, and here we found a more convenient space and a less Etruscan boulder, on which she was deposited. There was more room; but it seemed that the secret of Rome still lurks in rather confined and dingy places. The Forum on a spring morning is a sweet spot, and Mr. Ram assured me that

he loved every stone of it; the columns tower against the blue sky, roses scramble among the mouldering walls, the dark ilex-crown of the Palatine hangs nobly on its height. But the Professor dragged us away from the view and the roses, he thrust us into a dusty corner where there was nothing to be seen except the blank face of the brickwork to which he joyously pointed. Now, he said, we could perceive for ourselves the conclusion to which his argument had tended; and he shone so radiantly with his glee in the surprise prepared for us that Julia bravely gave a cry and a gasp of recognition on behalf of all. He was enchanted with his success. "I knew you would see it at once," he said proudly; "*that* speaks for itself." He patted and caressed it with the hand of a collector, a connoisseur; it appeared to be a little rim or ledge of greyish cement between the reddish bricks.

His triumph illuminated the shabby corner. Julia's falsity, Mrs. Rollesby's palpitation, Mr. Ram's uneasy mistrust in the neighbourhood of Kathleen—he was rapt above all these in his blissful vision. I don't know that any of us attained to a share in it; for even Julia, who perhaps came nearest, was so much disturbed by her own rashness and by the fear of being unmasked that she was altogether thrown out in her absorption of the message. She was soon in a fearful state of muddle between the homely touch and the human note, and if the Professor had had eyes for anything post-Iberian (but the pad must surely have got this word wrong) he couldn't have failed to see that her attention wandered. I attribute my own confusion in the matter of the sewer and the grey cement in the first place to the hen-necked girl (whom Julia addressed as "Hicksie

dear")—for the eye was fatally drawn by her pad; and secondly to Mrs. Rollesby's alarming attack—which in spite of her niece's treatment abated little on the boulder, some of the symptoms being so tumultuous that they even affected the Professor in his cloud. Mr. Ram, moreover, was inclined to attach himself to me, as the only member of the party who wasn't rather rough with him; for the dry bones of learning, he said, left him cold, and he wanted to point out to somebody that the past only lives for us when it is touched by a poetic imagination. So he pointed it out to me, and in principle I agreed with him; but I couldn't admit that the Professor was wanting in poetry. To me he seemed romantically poetic, and though his argument escaped me I appreciated the spirit of his dream.

It was the spirit of those old fine men, the scholars of the great revival, to whom the glory of antiquity was disclosed in the recovery of the lost books and the forgotten tongue; and even more, perhaps, it was the spirit of the artist, the lover of the marble and the bronze, who stood in breathless expectation while the spade unearthed the buried goddess and gave her back after long eclipse to a newly adoring world. As Poggio over a brown Greek manuscript, as Michael over the great smooth limbs that had lain for a thousand years of oblivion in the soil of the vineyard—so our Professor was hailing no less than a revelation in his turn. What is the mere fidget of the foreground, the present, the transient, compared with the huge unchanging past, where everything is secured and established under the appearance of eternity?—and how, when the obstruction is wonderfully pierced, the page restored, the earth of the present shovelled away, shall we refrain from dashing

headlong into the world thrown open, serenely offering itself to our exploration? "There, there's the appropriate country"—for no man can think rarely and intensely in the rattle of things proceeding, changing, palpitating, catching the eye momently with their ambiguous queries. A scholar shares the blest opportunity of the higher mathematician, and the two of them share it with the artist; all three, and doubtless the saint for a fourth, inhabit a region of completed things, of motionless truth. It is not to say that they are calm and motionless themselves—the Professor almost dances and leaps in the inspiration of his research, returning again and again to the wonder of the speaking brickwork. But the truth that he seeks is there before him, eternally disposed for the hand, the eye, the brain—and I am not afraid of Mr. Ram's own word, for the poetic imagination—that is able to discern and seize it.

To the Professor it was as lovely as a lyric of Sappho or a torso of the golden age. His fingers rested on the battered brick, the rubbish, the rubble—whichever it was that held the secret—with a touch that might have been laid on the exquisite curves of the perfect marble. His statue had come to the light, he chanted its beauty, he was ready to linger over its gracious lines for the benefit even of a few ignorant gapers like ourselves. Homely indeed!—and human!—Julia was wide of the mark. It was divine, if the word means anything, in its immortal completeness; and as for homeliness, why it carries you off into the clouds, a soft tattered cloud yourself, so that the earth with its gapers and its great fat panting gobblers is forgotten—or would be if it weren't for the singular moanings of the dying storm in Mrs Rollesby's breast. These, as I have said, did occasion

ally penetrate to the Professor; he glanced earthward with a puzzled look, as though he asked himself whether he had heard or only fancied the report of some commotion. Only fancy, he concluded; and he returned to the height of his discourse—which all this time you must imagine to have been ranging onward, sweeping backward, darting and circling as vivaciously as ever. The wretched Hicksie tore leaf after leaf from her pad, scattering fresh interrogations as fast as the last were answered. Julia was still bright and eager, but her bad conscience was beginning to show in the flush of her dishevelment. The Professor alone didn't flag; we had given up all thought of the roses and the view, and we gazed stonily at his vigour. Oh, the common earth of the present had little with which to retain such a man; he was caught into the past, into the loving celebration of his statue, his lyric—which is my figure for the secret revealed to his exploring and divining scholarship. I envy him as I envy an artist and a saint, or even a mathematician; there, there's where I would be, where things stand still and are silent, and you roam among them, chanting the rapture of your research, till you drop. That is a life.

And what was the secret after all? I picture it vaguely as a brilliant divination and revival of the past, the result of the play of the Professor's penetrating insight upon the vast amassment of his learning. I think of his jubilant glee as aroused, how naturally, by some great spectacle of the ancient world that he perceives in the light of his patient faithful studies. Alas, it is vague to me; but he sees it as clearly, no doubt, beneath the dust and rubbish of the Forum, as I see the green-veiled woman who strays drearily into our corner,

murmuring over her red handbook "to our right lie the rude substructures of the peristyle." And in point of fact I am quite as wide of the mark as Julia herself. The Professor was not the man to have spent good time and good thought over the visionary fancies I ascribed to him; not for him to be a mere "popularizer of the specious"—a phrase that he utters with hissing scorn, for it is one of his side-hits at the showier lore of a "sister university." No, the Professor took a different view of the scholar's privilege. It is for the scholar to find a loose stone or an insidious chink in the work of his predecessors and to leave it tightened and stopped; then as he dies he tells himself that he has done something which needed doing—not every man can say as much. Was it a small thing?—it may seem a small thing to you or me, but the Professor retorts that in these matters our clumsy measure is of no authority; if a fact has been inserted where no fact was, then truth is the better for it—and with what sort of scale, pray, will you undertake to estimate the betterment of truth? All this nonsense of torsos and secrets and lyrics may be well enough in a pretty book; but the Professor has been putting a great deal of energy into an explanation, which I seem to have totally misunderstood, of the point that had baffled—or worse, that had deceived and misled—all researchers before him. He has demonstrated his own theory, and when I mention that it has found complete acceptance even at the "sister university" (where to be sure they consider it a trifling matter—they *would*!) I think we may assume that a fanciful amateur, vacantly gaping, is not likely to find a flaw in it. Here is something accomplished for a man to rest upon with satisfaction—so much so that even now, after an

hour of mercurial discourse, the Professor is still prepared to go springing off to the next dusty corner and rude substructure that speaks for itself in support of his view.

But what is it, what is it? At this distance of time I long to know, but I confess that at the moment, what with the wear and tear of the various distractions I have described, I could only agree with Mr. Ram that the day was indeed growing "sultry"—I never heard this word on the lips of anyone else—and that it would be pleasant to seek a little repose and refreshment. Mr. Ram looked at his watch—"Time for a little *vino*, a little *spaghetti*," he insinuated gently and playfully; and though he spoke aside to me, the suggestion was caught up with promptitude by Mrs. Rollesby. All eyes were again directed upon Julia, and poor harassed Julia had once more to begin coughing and sniffing significantly at each of the Professor's full stops. Kathleen indeed told her aunt plainly that lunch on the top of "all that stodge" at breakfast would be disastrous for one so lately startled; and Mr. Ram drew a sharp breath between his teeth as she added, swinging round at him and pointing to his waist, "Yes, and for you too, Mr. Ram—you'd much better come for a tramp with me before you lay on any more of that deposit." Hicksie also seemed to have no thought of food or rest; her scribbling was by this time almost delirious in the fever of its queries, but she stuck to it. And the Professor ran on, ran on, blind to Mrs. Rollesby, deaf to Julia—until it happened as before, he suddenly apologized for being compelled to disturb us again, and was gone. This time he was gone so imperceptibly that Mrs. Rollesby was unfluttered; she was consulting Mr.

Ram with regard to the handiest place for her lunch. Might we decently take it that the lecture was finished? Not so—Julia, beckoning me to follow, had dashed in pursuit of the Professor; we saw her scrambling up a steep bank to a sort of platform among the ruins, elevated and exposed, where he was renewing his exposition to an audience of one—for the faithful Hicksie had kept pace with him and was sitting at his feet, bent already over a new page. Julia gained the height and doubled his audience; and Mr. Ram and I, glancing at each other rather guiltily, suggested that they seemed very well as they were. The Professor was clearly quite unconscious of the dwindling of his audience; we seized our chance.

Over our *sorso di vino*, as Mr. Ram still called it, I was inclined to think that we had indeed been very near the heart of things Roman that morning—very near, if not completely in touch with it. The Professor's single-minded certainty was contagious; he held his faith as a grain of mustard-seed, and his passion almost convinced me that we waste our time in our random researches, away from his guidance, after the heart of Rome. Suppose Julia was right, and it was the Professor who had really the clue—for indeed there was a quality in his faith, with its blankness to vulgar appeals, which hadn't been noticeable on the whole among the rest of our band. Unfortunately I couldn't put my question to Mr. Ram; he was pre-occupied with his own more tender, more understanding and sensitive love of every stone of the Forum. It hurt him to see the Forum treated as a class-room, and he blamed himself for having suffered Miss Julia to include him, much against his rule, in the class. He didn't wish to speak

of the Professor, but rather of the impression that the Forum, familiar as it was, had made upon himself last evening in a strangely "bistred" afterglow, whatever that may be. But with all his tenderness the faith of Mr. Ram was a languid thing beside that of the Professor, and I returned to the impression that the Forum had made upon myself in the iridescent halo (thus I capped Mr. Ram) of the Professor's ardour. Where had I seen the like of it? Nowhere at all, I reflected, except perhaps in one place—and that was the great church, when the genius of Rome came riding and swaying over the heads of the multitude. Those eager votaries, yelling their homage—the Professor dancing in his zeal: they had come to Rome with something in common, their single mind.

A STUDIO!—I FOUND MYSELF AT LAST IN the studio of an artist. Deering had mocked my bookish and antiquated notions of Roman life and I had obediently dropped them; I had thrown over Hawthorne and Andersen, even the ingenuous romance of poor old Zola, and my pursuit of reality had carried me along the path that I have traced. But at last I arrived at a studio, and I hadn't spent ten minutes there before I was back again in the dear familiar company of the Improviser and the Faun, the friends of my sentimental and pre-Deering past. I had had an inkling of them even as I approached the door; for the Via Margutta, tucked under the terrace of the Pincian Hill, is a corner of Rome where you might well expect to be brushed by their gentle ghosts. It is a street of studios, or it was a few days ago—perhaps it is a street of motor-works and cinema-houses by now; and a quiet by-street not far from the Spanish Steps, full of shabby buildings with high northern lights, was still populous with Kenyon and Donatello and Roderick, for me at least it was, in that spring-time of the middle distance to which I now look back. Even as I turned into the Via Margutta, then, I had a hint that Deering had deceived me; and ten minutes later I knew he had, for I stood before the canvases that lined the studio of Mr. Vickery.

He was as loud and deaf and picturesque as I had seen and heard at Miss Gainsborough's; he wore a great blue smock and a loose slouch-cap of black velvet, his white hair coiled upon his shoulders. There was a bewildering crowd of people in the big room, and there were several low tables spread out with fine old china

and a lavish refection; and at first I was rather taken aback, for Mr. Vickery's invitation to me had implied that I should find him lost to the world as usual and dabbling in his paints, but glad to welcome a friend to the casual cheer of an old Bohemian. He was casually welcoming such a crowd, and the strawberry-dishes were so many, and the room was so grand with tapestries and armour and cushioned divans, that I was struck shy and lonely at the start, forgetting my pleasant hint of Kenyon outside; but Mr. Vickery rolled jovially to greet me—he had a large rocking movement on his legs that was full of heartiness—and begged me to put up with the easy ways of an old Bohemian like himself. He was very loud and clear upon the point, and I heard him reiterate it as he rambled among his guests; I made out that we had all dropped in upon him casually, and must take him as we found him in the rude simplicity of his workshop. Presently he had picked up a palette daubed with colours and was wearing it on his thumb; and he clutched a sheaf of long-handled brushes that he threw down with splendid geniality to grasp the hand of somebody arriving or departing. We had surprised him, it appeared, at work on a gigantic canvas, a landscape, which was hoisted on an easel so tremendous that he had to climb by a step-ladder to reach the azure distances of the Alban hills. He climbed to them again from time to time, and he looked wonderfully striking, I must say, as he stood on the steps, his brush poised, glancing over his shoulder with a laughing boyish word to the crowd below.

The great picture represented a view of the Roman Campagna; the azure hills were seen through the straddling stilted arches of one of the ruined aqueducts;

in the foreground was a party of goats, attended by a handsome old man, sheepskin-clad, who shaded his eyes and looked benignantly across at a boy blowing a pipe in the left-hand corner—and the boy, as I live, had matted curls and a pair of weather-stained velvet breeches. My mind flew to Deering—he should hear of this! Deering was too clever by half, with his derision of my innocent fancies; here was an artist, just as I had supposed, who duly studied the "picturesque models" of the English ghetto and introduced them into a picture as venerable and as romantic and as big almost as the Campagna itself. Is it into a picture, moreover? It is into fifty pictures, hung on the walls or tilted on easels all about the studio; and I wandered from one to another, very pleasantly, in the recovered company of my familiar old friends. Hawthorne murmured his prim harmonious phrases; another and a younger figure, very watchful under the careful correctness of his bearing, noticed everything and said little; and we passed from picture to picture, pausing before each with a smile of charmed recognition. The old man in his sheepskin, the boy in his curls, met us by many a crumbling arch of a sun-bathed aqueduct; and sometimes they met us in a street-scene, by a splashing fountain and a gay flower-stall, where they were joined by a girl with gleaming teeth and black provocative eyes; and again they met us in deep mountain-valleys, very verdurous and lonely, where there was a ruined temple on the height of a crag and a bandit at the mouth of a cavern; and everywhere the sheepskin and the curls and the fine dark glances had a charm for us, away from Deering's sarcastic eye, to which I for one surrendered in comfort and peace. This was a world

I knew; it was quite a relief to cease from facing reality for a few minutes.

I was brought back to reality by encountering Miss Gadge, who said (as my shadowy companions vanished) that there was nothing she enjoyed more, as an old Roman, than a prowl round the studio of a true artist. She delighted in the temple and the bandit, but she seemed a little distraught in her reverence by her desire to talk about the people present. She had a great deal of information concerning all the company, and she hastened to impart it—for it would interest me, she said, to know something of the kind of types one met in a typically Roman studio. She went through them all, giving of each what is called a "thumbnail" sketch; she admitted that the phrase was Emmeline's, and that in Emmeline's society she had fallen into the habit of seeing people always in an intensely typical light—Emmeline says that a novelist does so quite instinctively. "Now that girl there with the blue beads—she's a kind you only see in Rome: very charming, very lady-like and that—pretty I *don't* say, and a bad complexion, but that's neither here nor there; well, her name is Sandra Deeprose (an odd name, isn't it?)—" Miss Gadge's sketches seemed to be wanting in crispness, and for an observer of type she was excessively occupied with the individual, but she wandered on over the company and presented me with a large number of facts and names. Mr. Vickery, she told me, was held to be the *doyen* of the "colony" in Rome; he had lived in Rome for ever, from far back in the ancient days of the Pope-King; he had known everybody, he had known the Brownings—and sharply on that word I looked round to devour the strange new wonderful sight of a man who had known

the Brownings. He happened to be standing at the far end of the room with his back against a darkly figured hanging of tapestry; and his head in its florid grandeur, so carefully composed, was relieved upon its background like a daring portrait—brilliantly, slashingly painted, you might say, by some artist not afraid of an obvious effect. Of his own effect Mr. Vickery was very sure, and with reason; he offered himself as a finished achievement of art and nature, sufficient as he stood. But far from it, he was at that moment nothing in himself, he was everything for what he implied—to one pair of eyes at least, fixed on him with intensity. He had known the Brownings—how strange it seems and new!

It was true enough, no doubt; Miss Gadge was certain of the fact, she had heard him speak of "picnics in the Campagna" with the Brownings—the throb of the thought was almost painful to me as she said it. But how delightful, she pursued, to know that I was a 'Browning-lover" like herself; and she dropped the subject of the picnics in order to quote, to declaim some lines from "Rabbi ben Ezra" in a strangulated sing-song, quite unlike her ordinary voice, which expressed the power of her devotion to the poet. "Grow old along with me—" she intoned the lines in a hoarse and quavering wail; and I broke out on her with a passionate cry, though it remained unheard, over the depth of her misunderstanding. If a wish could have struck her in the face she would have reeled on the spot; but though I had struck her I couldn't have made her understand how completely she mistook my feeling. 'It's not *that*," I might have burst out, "not in the least like *that*!"—and how should she have understood that my sudden interest in Mr. Vickery was larger and

rarer and stranger than that of a "Browning-lover," even of one who could intone the chant of the Rabbi from end to end. I could any day have repeated the poems of Browning against Miss Gadge, though not on the pitch of her wail; but I was high above *them*, I felt, when I started at the sight of Mr. Vickery—at the gleam of the eagle-feather. I was with the Brownings in the Campagna, suddenly *with* them, stopping to speak to them: don't you understand?—I wasn't repeating their poems, which I have known by heart for years. It was useless to try explaining this to Miss Gadge, and I let her quaver on while I gazed my fill at the wonder. It was a strange excitement; and I don't pretend to make light of it as I now look back, or to smile distantly at the thought of the thrill, the wild sweet breeze that ran through the imagination of the youthful onlooker. A man who had known the Brownings—there he stood!

The company thinned at length, and I was able to approach him, though I knew full well that the demon of shyness would prevent my questioning him, as I longed to question, on the subject of the picnics. But first I was held awhile longer by Miss Gadge, who on discovering that I was a less worthy worshipper of the poet than she had imagined went on with her study of type; and this brought her to a shabby and crumpled little old woman who was slipping furtively about the room with a purposeful air, talking to nobody. Miss Gadge named her, and the name was indeed a surprise—Mrs. Vickery; she was actually the wife of our resplendent host, but Miss Gadge threw a world of meaning into her headshake and her delicate grimace as she referred to her. Poor Mr. Vickery, all through his long and sumptuous career that dowdy impediment had hung to

him; and Miss Gadge, like all his admirers, was impressed by his fidelity—though indeed you might equally call it his wife's tenacity. But to do her justice she kept to the background when his brilliance was turned to the world; I could see this for myself, as she slunk among his visitors without attempting to pretend they were hers. Look, however—at that moment Mrs. Vickery did venture to accost one of them, a queer untidy bundle of a woman not unlike herself, though much more colourful and bold-eyed. "Ah yes, of course," said Miss Gadge, nodding shrewdly, "she talks to the reporter"; for the bold bundle, it seemed, was a common type, a haunter of studios and public places and *some* drawing-rooms even, where she picked up what she could for the exceedingly vulgar and brazen newspaper that you know so well. Mrs. Vickery fastened upon her with decision and drew her apart; and they stood together by one of the easels—not indeed looking at the picture, but evidently speaking of it, for Mrs. Vickery jerked her thumb at the bandit and proceeded to explain something very minutely to the journalist, emphasizing her points with a finger tapped on her palm. I caught a snatch of her explanation as I passed up the room. "He *never* asks less," Mrs. Vickery was saying earnestly—"and he feels it should be *known*."

The artist was now at work again; he was mounted on his step-ladder, that is to say, with brush poised and palette displayed, and at intervals he gave a masterly stroke to the Alban hills. He wanted to get "a little more nerve, more *race*, into the folds": such was his odd expression. The crowd had cleared, but there was a small knot of people still clustered about him, and the

braver occasionally sent a compliment or a question bawling up at him. "Don't talk to me of 'movements,'" he genially cried back; "the only movement a painter should think of is *this*"—and he twirled his brush in a narrowing spiral till it lighted on tiptoe in a fold of the hills. "The only movement I attend to is my own," he exclaimed, swinging round, flashing on us superbly; "it extends from my house to my studio and back again. 'Don't talk about art—show me your work—here's mine': that's what I say to the youngsters. My trade is paint, and I stick to it. An honest tradesman before the world—that's what an artist should make and keep himself. Before the world, mark you!—his dreams are his own affair. Ah, his dreams—!" Mr. Vickery paused, dropping his brush, and he smote his hand to his eyes and held it there in a long silence. "My God, his dreams!" he murmured. The little group of us stood in a row below him, hushed and intent. The grand old figure of the painter towered against the monument of his toil, and the light of a spacious age seemed to beat on him in the hush. An old master-craftsman of the Renaissance, in his flat velvet cap, his loose blue working-garb—a tradesman he called himself, sturdy in his pride, but we had a glimpse of what he hid from the world. More than a glimpse indeed; for it was a long minute, I should think, before he turned and caught up his brush and set boisterously to work again. As he did so I was sharply prodded from behind—by the lady-reporter, I discovered. "What was that about dreams?" she asked; "did he mean *art*-dreams?" She wanted to have it clear, but Mrs. Vickery stole swiftly forward and nudged her for another point. "You quite under-

stand," Mrs. Vickery distinctly whispered, "that it mustn't appear to come from *him*—what I told you."

Before long the painter stepped down from his ladder, inspected the nerve of the hills from the proper distance and declared himself satisfied. He stretched his arms with a long happy sigh. "Well, well, well, it's a great game—thank the gods for it! Where should I have been without it these fifty years? Can you imagine me without my poor old toys, Marchesa? Colour-box and canvas—give me them and take the rest! 'He was born, he painted, he died'—my biography; when you write it don't add another word." The Marchesa looked at him with kind timid eyes (she was a very tall and angular Englishwoman) and answered vaguely; she spoke vaguely because it was impossible for her to reach Mr. Vickery's hearing with her gentle huskiness, so that it didn't matter what she said. The artist motioned her to a big divan and threw himself beside her among the cushions. He talked on. "Ah, there has been some work done in this old room for fifty years! What's been happening all that time in the world, Marchesa? You great ones of the earth have had your hour and your power, and I hope you've enjoyed it. A poor painter wishes well to the world, always, for so long as the world is happy and busy it will forget the poor painter—he counts on that." Mr. Vickery's glance roved for a moment, taking in the circle of his listeners; his wife was still engaged with the reporter at a distance, but she looked hastily round on the pause and gave the reporter a little push, directing her towards the divan. This lady hurried across and took a vacant chair by my side. Mr. Vickery had turned again to address the Marchesa, and he proceeded

to speak with emotion of the long lonely laborious service to which a painter is dedicated; and insensibly he lifted the veil, musing to himself, and the light fell upon the hope, the faith, the ambition that an artist so jealously hugs and hides. "He hugs them like a secret," said Mr. Vickery, his voice dropping almost to a whisper, "a secret that he daren't profane." Once more there was a silence. My neighbour bent to me anxiously: "Did he say 'profane'?" she enquired; "why profane, do you think?—do ask him."

I don't know in what form the "Roman studio-chat" appeared in the brazen journal, but if the good lady had as much difficulty in sorting her impressions as I had over mine she can't have got them ready for the following Saturday. The Marble Faun, the Brownings, the goatherd and the bandit, and then the resplendence of Mr. Vickery—in all this there was far too much for an easy cosy column with plenty of "cross-headings," even if one left out the array of the types. Mrs. Vickery by herself might be the substance of a leisurely chat; she didn't attend the session of the divan—she was very busy at a writing-table in a far corner, where she seemed to be sorting papers, making entries in books, stowing things into drawers and locking them up with jingling keys. She at least was forgotten by the world and obviously knew she could count on it; but if one happened to notice her she appeared as the one small sign of lonely concentration in the decorative staging of an artist's life. I watched her examining a slip of paper, biting her pen; and presently she left her place, edged round the wall to the divan, and unobtrusively offered the paper and the pen to one of our party, a well-fed middle-aged man with side-whiskers. "You've

forgotten to fill in the date," I heard her say softly. He filled it in, apologizing, and as she moved away she added that it would be sent without fa l to his hotel next morning. Mrs. Vickery was attending to business, assured that the world was happy without her; she locked up the slip of paper and returned to the entries in her note-book. Yes, I think she would have made the best subject of all for one of the "jottings in Rome"; but the jotter missed it—she was preparing to ask Mr. Vickery about the profanity that she had also inadvertently missed.

He gave her no opportunity, however, so I suppose she had to supply it herself in the chat. I too had had my own question for Mr. Vickery, if I could have found the courage to bawl it—or rather if I could have framed it in any words. But I no longer desired to ask him about the Brownings, and indeed the air of the studio wasn't favourable to questions, with its comfort so easy and public and its pictures so candid and explicit. If you want the answer to any question, look round you!—the room tells you all there is to be told. There was certainly nothing mysterious about the pictures; with one voice they declared themselves, repeating their frank formula with the glibness of fifty voluble years. There was nothing questionable about the luxurious installation of their maker—nothing, at any rate, if one noticed the obscure corner of industry that attracted so little attention. And least of all did the painter himself provoke any doubts that he didn't plainly satisfy, with his picturesque frontage turned so full to the light; the fumbling reporter was the only person who had missed a syllable of anything he intended to convey. And the upshot of it all was that Mr. Vickery had endured from

a blander age, bringing a waft of its goodly confidence and ease, trailing a train of its illustrious memories—only *not* bringing, as it happened, the forgotten secret on which its glory and its confidence reposed. The blander world of romantic Rome didn't greatly trouble itself with questions, didn't object to a florid style, wasn't afraid of the telling effect of a handsome old head against the bluest hills of Italy; but there *had* been something else, and Mr. Vickery didn't chance to have brought it with him—it remained with the Brownings, they kept it. Let me ask Miss Gadge what it was. She thinks it must have been their *depth*, and she is ready to intone the whole of " Abt Vogler " to bear out her opinion.

Mr. Vickery, then, survived in our thin and acid air, to meet the assault of carping doubts from which his prime was protected; and he hadn't the depth (if that is Miss Gadge's word) to keep the faith of the romantic age as impressively as it was kept in his youth. I was glad that he had escaped the eye of Deering, to whom I should never betray him; Mr. Vickery, taken as he stood, too freely gave away the honour of Roman romance to be revealed to Deering. With me it was safe; but that sardonic observer, I am sure, wouldn't consent to view the old survivor as I did, as I still can, when he placed himself before the dark tapestry with the golden light streaming full upon his patriarchal nobility. For me he was the man who remembered the great days, who had roamed in the Campagna with poets, and the man in whose studio the shadows of genius were still to be seen and talked with if one loved them. I loved them myself so dearly that I could easily give Mr. Vickery the benefit of their presence; and in their presence one didn't take him as he stood, far from

it, but with the lustre of his association upon him, strange and new. Deering wouldn't have had this fond understanding; indeed he would have steeled himself against it with his modern doctrine that one mustn't read books, at any rate in Rome. "Come out of your books," he had exhorted me, and it wasn't likely that he would relapse with me into Browning at this hour—into Browning, whose influence had been strong on him during a period of manly piety through which he had passed in the nursery. So I kept Mr. Vickery to myself hugging him in secret, and I was content to ask no questions about those eagle-feathered picnics of the past. It is much for us if we can catch but a reflection of the light of the great days; it is enough, even though their depth is screened from us by fifty commoner years. Mr. Vickery shall not be exposed to the daunting chill of Deering's irony if I can help it.

Such was my feeling; for it seemed clear to me that Mr. Vickery had lived on incautiously till he faced a critical age, knowing nothing of its deadly arts, needing protection. And thereupon I noticed that he was now conducting the Marchesa and the well-fed man on a tour round the studio, pausing at one after another of the pictures; and I began to perceive, following and listening, how much he required my kindly care while he was flanked by the great ones of the earth. The well-fed man was Lord Veneering (or something to that effect), and he explained to the Marchesa that he was "forming a gallery" at a little place he had bought in the country, and that Mr. Vickery had very obligingly "aided him with expert advice"; and the Marchesa said pleasantly that one couldn't do better than follow Mr. Vickery's taste, because he possessed, what is nowadays so rare,

the spirit of the great masters. "This," said Mr. Vickery, indicating one of the canvases, "is a little smudge of paint that pleases me as well as anything I ever did—which may seem odd to a layman, for it's purely a painter's picture. Very bad policy, in these days, to spend time over work like that; but we paint for each other, we of the trade—we understand." The velvet breeches and the sheepskin seemed to me to occupy their usual places in this picture, but his lordship was particularly struck by their "high relief." Mr. Vickery didn't hear, he was lost for a moment in contemplation. "Yes," he said, "a painter would understand what I've tried to say there." Our carping age, represented by the Marchesa and Lord Veneering, reverently gazed. Mrs. Vickery, still over her papers at the table, glanced up at her husband with a look that understood more, I incline to think, than many painters. Certainly he was well muffled against our chilling and doubting day; but I wonder how he would have shielded his complacency if his wife had spoken her mind. However she was much too deep in her entries and reckonings for a wild idea like that.

I DON'T PLEDGE MYSELF TO THE ACTUAL street, twisting into the dark heart of Rome, that led me to the great solemn palace of the Marchesa; but it might have been the street of the Dark Shops, and I am apt to think it may. It rambled vaguely into the gloom of all the ages and brought me to a stand before an immense *portone*, the doorway of a family whose classic name was inscribed in monumental lettering upon the lintel. What a name!—it strode away across the long centuries, it wore the purple and the tiara, it raised its shout in the bloody brawls of its faction, it disappeared into the barbaric night; and again it emerged, plain to see, clear in the classic day, the pride and the renown of the young republic. It seems, as you read it over the doorway, to speak casually of Scipio, of Cincinnatus, friends of yesterday, vanished so lately that there has barely been time to miss them; and there may be a touch of parade in this, but who shall prove it? —and anyhow it is a great and glorious name, nobly time-worn from its immemorial journey, and it is written over the dark archway of the palace for its only and sufficient decoration. You enter accordingly under the sign of all the Roman history that you ever read, you cross the cloistered court and mount the broad sweep of the staircase; and you find yourself in the presence of a shy kind elderly Englishwoman, who appears to be still wondering a little, after many years, how she came there.

The great old family, though it still held up its head with high dignity, seemed to have outlived its fortune in the world. The Marchesa sat in the midst of tattered and shredded relics of splendour, mildly boiling her kettle over a spirit-lamp; and I don't know how she

came there, but in many years she had never succeeded in wearing her faded state with confidence, and she looked forlorn and patient, quietly accepting as a duty a condition of things that she didn't understand. She was too ladylike in her gentle manners for the worldly pride of her majestic drawing-room; and whereas its majesty held aloof more proudly than ever in impoverishment, she herself was too humble to reject the little comfort and kindness of a hissing kettle and a few sociable friends to tea. She tried to keep one hand upon their homely support without losing touch at the same time with the palatial scorn that watched her; and yet there was a disconnexion somehow, and she hadn't the power, the impudence, the adaptability, whatever it might be, to make herself the link between the two. It may have been easier in the Marchese's lifetime (he was long departed); but now she had to carry her prodigious name by herself, and the weight of the responsibility, and her earnest sense of her duty, and her simple unassuming inefficiency—what with it all there was much to make her look anxious and bewildered while we sat, she and I, waiting for the kettle to boil. She was conscious of having too much history on her hands; and yet she couldn't in loyalty disown it and settle comfortably down upon the style and culture of a plain quiet Englishwoman.

The good Marchesa, she had somehow been left all alone in her august establishment by deaths, accidents, dispositions that are obscure to me; but the result of them was that she sat by herself in a corner of her mighty palace, watched and terrorized from a distance by a crowd of her kindred, offshoots in many degrees of her husband's race—a needy Roman throng possess-

ing complicated claims on her, rights to bully her; chances to torment her with conscientious scruples; and no doubt she had found that her integrity and her perfect manners were a very poor match for the guile of twenty centuries of Rome. "I'm expecting two English nephews of mine this afternoon," she said—"such dear boys"; and again, "My sister writes to me from Devonshire to ask me if I can introduce them to a few nice friends": that was the tone of the Marchesa, and it wouldn't seem that she could offer much resistance to a band of hungry wily Romans. It was more, however, than might be thought, for her back was straight and firm in her duty at any cost to herself; only it all made a puzzling task, and there was no one and nothing around to support her, to stand by her side with encouragement and explanation, unless it was the companionable English tea-cup in a corner of her huge old drawing-room. It will presently appear how it is that I can read such a tale in her shy plainness, but much of it would be legible even without what I afterwards learned. She was an exceedingly simple soul.

The Principessa was simple too in her way, but it was not the same way. "Why, Gertrude," she cried, rustling down the long room from the doorway, "don't you look lovely to-day!" (It was the voice of New York.) "But that's nothing new—I don't tell you what you don't *very* well know—only it strikes me fresh every time I see you!" And indeed the slight flush and smile that began to spread upon the Marchesa's brownish pallor did become her, as she rose to greet her guest. "Every time I see you," repeated the Principessa, brightly glancing. "There's something about you that's perfection, and I shall *never* know just what it is.

Don't you want to tell me what it is? You needn't be afraid—I shan't ever be able to copy it. I watch my little girl every day to see if she won't catch a look of it somehow. 'My blessed child,' I say to her, 'for mercy's sake try to look *real*—like the Marchesa.' But she doesn't, she looks like her father—and you know the sort of old Greek plaster-cast that *he* is, and all his family. I tell them they can't impose on *me* with their grand pretences; I've seen the real thing. I never meant to marry Filippo, I meant to marry a man out of an English novel—yes, the same novel that *you* come out of, Gertrude, whichever it is; if I happen to find it I shall throw over Filippo and bolt—he's well aware of it. Don't you want to tell me his name, Gertrude—the name of the hero in your novel? Maltravers, Sir John Mauleverer, something like that; you know I come here in the hope of meeting him. Some day he'll turn up and I shall fly into his arms; he'll quite understand."

The Principessa was perfect too in her way, but it was not the way of the Marchesa. They sat side by side on a broad couch; and if the most eloquent aspect of their contrast was on their lips and in their speech, there was another almost as vivid that was plainly displayed at this moment on the floor. The Marchesa's long flat foot, with its well-worn shoe and the hole in her grey stocking, rested on the floor beside the Principessa's smart little arch, with its dolphin-like plunge from heel to toe and its exquisite casing of down-soft leather and filigree silk; it was a lucid contrast, the two of them side by side. The Principessa was altogether small, compact, and neater than I should have thought it possible for any one to be neat on our rolling globe; but small and trim as she was she managed to rustle (to

rustle!—I revive the forgotten word in an age that no longer knows the liquefaction of her clothes whenas she goes!)—she rustled in a manner that the Marchesa, though with so much more height to sweep from, had never dreamed of emulating. Rustling, it may be, depended more on depth of purse than height of person; and indeed you couldn't notice the tip of the Principessa's little finger, let alone the brilliant arch of her foot, without observing that it cost more at every breath she drew than the whole angular person of the Marchesa through the long quiet day. The Principessa was consummately expensive—though with a finely pointed extremity of taste that again the Marchesa had never caught a glimpse of; from the tilt of her big hat the little Principessa was the spirit of expense to the click of her neat heel. And yet, yet—what is it that she sees in the good incompetent Marchesa, sees and admires and owns to be beyond imitation? Let me ask—why yes, most appropriately, let me ask Miss Gilpin.

Miss Gilpin, however, is not so ready with information as Miss Gadge; for Miss Gilpin in the palace of the Marchesa is considerably more pre-occupied, less communicative, than she is in the lodging of the Clarksons. Several other people had arrived or were arriving, and a side-glance of her attention in passing was all she could spare for her awkward young friend. She was very agile and easy herself, slipping among the company like a bird of pretty plumage, moving so lightly that you would never suppose such a fresh young thing to be a woman of professional learning and experience. She lifts her wide clear gaze to the face of the person whom she addresses, and it might be almost embarrassing in its frank admiration, but her gay little well-worded

remarks relieve it; and she never lingers, never clings, she is drawn away to somebody else and flits on with a shining look behind her; and so she weaves her dance-figure through the company, and it brings her gradually to the side of the Principessa—at sight of whom she gives a tiny jump, as the unexpected pleasure beams out in her childlike eyes. The Principessa seemed to be less surprised, and Miss Gilpin got rather a cool return for her sparkle of delight. The dance was arrested with some abruptness; but there is this about Miss Gilpin, that she always has her wits about her and can adapt herself to a sudden change of plan. Her eye darted quickly forward to the Marchesa—and it was to the Marchesa after all that she had a particular word to say, if the other lady would forgive her for hastening on. One can safely count on the excellent Marchesa; yet it must be confessed that life is complicated, and Miss Gilpin sank a little wearily into an absorbing conversation with our hostess.

But what was the pretty plumage of Miss Gilpin, even at its most unruffled, compared with the rich hues of the creature that now swooped upon the modest gathering? Half flower and half bird—half peony and half macaw—Madame de Baltasar was in our midst; and so much so that nothing else for a while was in our midst—the central object was Madame de Baltasar. Peony in face, macaw in voice and raiment, she embraced and enveloped the Marchesa—who closed her eyes, evidently in prayer, as she nerved herself for the assault. The poor pale lady bore it unflinchingly, but that was all; she was cowed, she was numbed, by the mere voice of the visitor, equally penetrating in any language. The visitor, however, had no further need for the

Marchesa; what she needed was a slim and very beautiful young man who happened to be talking to the Principessa—she plucked and removed him without delay. Even as she did so another young man, also very well in his fashion, appeared accidentally in her path; he too was annexed; and Madame de Baltasar, doing what she could to lend them a conquering rather than a consenting air, established them in a corner with herself between them. The Marchesa, reviving, gave a sudden gasp at the sight; for the second victim, who was a very British and candid-looking youth in naval uniform, was one of the dear boys, her nephews, and a glimpse of the peony-face beside him brought the letter from Devonshire very sharply to her mind. "A few nice friends—!" The Principessa looked up with humour. "I feel for you, dear Gertrude," she said, "but what do you expect? Why ever do you let that woman into your house?" "I don't let her," wailed the Marchesa, very helpless. "Well, she's grabbed Don Mario from me and your nephew from you," said the Principessa comically; "at any rate they'll keep her quiet for a time." A peal of liberal shrieks rang out from the lady in the corner, and the Marchesa closed her eyes again in a mute petition.

It was a pleasantly expressive picture all the same, that of the group in the corner. The parti-coloured lady, who was by no means young, had so settled herself that she appeared imprisoned, penned in her place by two masterful men; and it would be natural to suppose that the two men were disputing for possession of her, but this effect was less easily contrived—since one of the men was English, of an odd unchivalrous tribe whose ways are beyond calculation. I don't know what race

had produced Madame de Baltasar—the united effort of them all, may be, for all their tongues were mingled in her shrieks; but there was no doubt concerning Don Mario—he was the last perfection of Latinity and he played his part. He was peerlessly beautiful, and he sat with his long fingers entwined about his knee, his eyes attentively upon the peony, his cold profile turned with utter correctness to his rival. He was far too mannerly, of course, to be jealous, to be hostile in any open movement; even when his rival failed to notice the lady's glove on the floor it was only by the barest implication of a gesture that Don Mario rebuked and triumphed over him. A lady in a corner may rely on Don Mario; however hard she begins to find it to tighten that horrid loose fold under her chin, however mauve the powder on her cheek now shows upon the underlying crimson, Don Mario's eyes are still fixed on her in deep unwavering attention. And Madame de Baltasar, I dare say, had by this time schooled herself to be blind to something that she might easily have seen, if she had chosen, in his steady regard—in that knightly "belgarde" which she accepted without scrutinizing it too closely; for he wasn't troubled to hide the serene amused impudence with which he played his part. The crazy old ruin, with her cautious neckband and her ruddled wrinkles—he lent himself politely to her ancient game, remarking that she had grown careless in the handling of the orange lights in her hair, which were certainly fitful and obscured towards the roots. But a lady needn't concern herself with the finer shades in Don Mario's eloquent looks; he can be thoroughly trusted, at any rate in a public corner of a drawing-room.

An Englishman on the other hand, a candid young

Briton, is a queer untutored thing of which you can never be really sure. The Marchesa's nephew was pink and pleasant, and his undisguised interest in Madame de Baltasar might please her, you would think, for any one could see that it was much more genuine than Don Mario's. It did please her, no doubt, and she liberally challenged and rallied him; she gave him more than his share, it was he who had the full blaze of her charms. He luminously faced them in return with the frankest interest and wonder; never, never had he seen such a wildly remarkable object. "Well, of all the queer old picture-cards—!" he said to himself; and he laughed with a volleying explosion at the freedom of her humour. He liked her too, the quaint old freak and spark that she was; you couldn't help liking her loud familiar cackle, her point-blank coquetries discharged with such brass and bounce; she brisked you up and rattled you on in a style you don't expect in the Marchesa's solemn saloon. To Madame de Baltasar, no doubt, the pink British face was an open book, and in his barbaric fashion the young man was well enough, and she enjoyed herself. But then his barbarism was declared in a manner of simplicity which proved to her, yes, that these island-seamen are not to be trusted as one may trust Don Mario. The open young sailor, instead of turning his own more faulty profile to his rival and ousting him in triumph—what must he do but burst out pleasantly to the knightly Latin, appeal to him with mirthful eyes, join hands with him hilariously to watch the sport! It was so, there was no mistaking it; the young British monster had drawn the other man, his antagonist, into a partnership of youth, irreverent, unchivalrous, to watch the raree-show of this marvellous

old bird and stimulate her to wilder efforts. And so naturally too, so ingenuously, like the great silly oaf that he really was, with his long legs and huge hands! It hadn't so much as crossed his mind that a woman, still a fine woman in her ripeness, was signally honouring a man; he only saw a crazy jolly absurd old sport who made him laugh so heartily that he had to share the fun with his neighbour. One can't be surprised if Madame de Baltasar asked herself what, in heaven's name, they teach these young monsters in their barbaric wild.

I find it impossible to tear my eyes from the group. What, I wonder, does Don Mario think of the young Englishman? They were evidently much of an age; but Don Mario could regard himself, no doubt, as a highly experienced gentleman compared with this bubbling school-boy. He knew the world, he knew himself, he very well knew the lady; and I fear it must be inferred that he thought the Englishman a negligible simpleton. The school-boy's familiarity could hardly please him, but he took it with his accomplished amenity, transformed it into a quiet and neutral kindness and handed it back; and the Englishman—ah, this is where the simple youth enjoys such an advantage, where he is unassailable—he saw no difference at all between what he gave and what he received again, he supposed they were the same. The same—his own thoughtless guffaw of companionship, Don Mario's civilized and discriminating smile!—well might Don Mario feel that the barbarian took much for granted. Communication upon such terms is out of the question, with the Englishman ready to fall on your neck—in fact the islander's arm was affectionately round Don Mario's at this moment—if you decently mask your irony in a fine thin

smile. But let it not be imagined that the Roman *civiltà*, heritage of the centuries, will exhibit any signal of discomfort, even with the hand of the savage patting it sociably and encouragingly on the back. Don Mario talked easily and with all his charm; he told a story, some experience of his own, for the entertainment of the lady. The details escape me, but it was a story in which the Englishman, listening closely, seemed to detect a drift and purpose, an approach to a point; and he listened still more carefully, gazing at the speaker, working it out in his mind; and his brow contracted, he was lost—but aha! he suddenly saw the light and he seized the point. "You mean you're in *love* with somebody," he jovially exclaimed. The words fell with a strange clatter on the polished surface of the tale, but Don Mario had caught them up in a wink. "Why certainly," he said—"I'm in love with Madame de Baltasar." Lord!—for the moment it was too quick for the blank and simple youth; but relief came with the lady's scream of delighted amusement, and he broke into the humour of the jest with resounding appreciation. A good fellow, this Don Whatever-he-is, and a sound old sport, Madame de What's-her-name—and altogether a cheerier time than one would look for at Aunt Gertrude's rather alarming tea-fight.

The Marchesa herself was finding it less enlivening; one of the dear boys had got into the wrong corner, the other was still missing, poor Nora Gilpin *would* try to waylay the Principessa; and though the Marchesa was used to the sense that nothing in the world goes ever easily, she betrayed in her look the weight of all she was carrying. But she was grateful to the Principessa, and with cause; for so long as Miss Gilpin was kept at a

distance the little American was indeed a treasure to an anxious hostess. Nothing gayer, nothing more ornamental and affable could be desired for a festival that threatened to languish. She sat on a round stool or tuffet, her small person erect, her knee tilted and her toe pointed like a porcelain shepherdess—a wonder of art, an exquisite toy of the eighteenth century; and one could infer how precious and rare the little figure must be from the fact that it was entirely perfect, not a finger broken, not a rose damaged on her decorative hat—which showed with what scrupulous care she had been packed and kept. One could almost have sworn that the tint of clear colour in her cheek was alert and alive, that it came and went with a living pulse; she was a triumph of the hand of the craftsman who produced her. And to think that she came, not from the cabinet of the Pompadour, but from the roaring market of democracy—how have they learnt such perfection of delicate workmanship over there? She seemed as manifestly the result of ages of inherited skill as Don Mario himself; at least I should say so, perhaps, but for the chance that again places them side by side before me. For Don Mario, the party in the corner having at last broken up, had returned to the Principessa; and he stood by her side, charmingly inclined, with glances more burning, less scorching, than those he had levelled at the orange-clouded fringe. And I now remark that with all Don Mario's beautiful finish he doesn't set one gaping at the price he must have cost; one sees in a moment than an object of that sort is not to be bought with money. "Not to be bought?"—I can imagine the tone of the Principessa, if she chose to speak: "He looks as though he weren't to be bought? Why, it's exactly *that* that

will fetch his price, and well he knows it. Not to be bought indeed!—I could tell you a little about that. Now there behind you—*there's* where money fails, if you like!"

She meant of course the Marchesa; and with the unspoken word of the china shepherdess in my ear I swing round towards the spectacle she faces. The sudden movement surprises the effect to which the Principessa no doubt alluded; I catch the Marchesa from the right point of view and I understand. The harassed soul was easier now, for the tropical intruder had departed and the simple seaman was re-established in more temperate company; the letter from Devonshire was no longer a reproach. The Marchesa breathed more freely; she stood for a moment unoccupied, resting upon her relief, almost persuaded that the world was leaving her in peace. She was no worldling, the good lady; neither she nor her forefathers had taken thought to be prepared for the world, to study the arts with which it may be repulsed, attracted, trodden under or turned to account. The Marchesa had no manners, no glances, no speeches—no raiment even, you might say—but those of her kindly nature, the well-meaning right-intending soul that she happened to be. She was not a work of art; and therein is the effect that she makes in her Roman palace, the effect you may surprise if you follow the word of the Principessa and look suddenly round. There clings about her, and she seems to diffuse it upon the company, a pallor of simple daylight, a grey uncertain glimmer from a morning in Devonshire; and it gives her a friendly gentle air, for it is the light to which she was born and it is natural to her; but to the Principessa, to Don Mario, even to the

Roman palace, it is not a trifle disastrous. The pretty little work of art upon the tuffet was aware of it, and I could fancy that she bids me look, look again at *her*, to see how ghastly her china-tints have become in the dimness of a rainy English morning. I won't say that—the Principessa exaggerated, perhaps defiantly; but it certainly was plain that she wasn't intended to face the open weather. Good Aunt Gertrude, troubled and incompetent in facing the world, could be left out in rain and storm at any time, and none the worse. The fibre that is by this betokened is not, we understand, to be bought for money. The Principessa may be right, but I doubt whether she honestly wishes her child to acquire it. After all the Marchesa is about as ornamental as the waterproof in which as a girl she braved the weather of an uncertain climate.

And now there arrived, there crossed the room with a quick step, there shook hands ceremoniously with the Marchesa, a personage whose appearance in that company I hadn't at all expected. Deering!—who could have supposed that Deering would present himself here, and that too at the very hour which is consecrated to the plush and marble of the real Rome in the Via Nazionale? He caught my eye as he crossed the room, and he smiled, as I thought, self-consciously; it put him slightly to the blush that I should see him attending the mild tea-pot of the Marchesa. She greeted him with pleased effusion and drew him aside; I wasn't near enough to hear their talk, but the Marchesa had evidently much to say, and Deering listened with his well-known gleam of sarcastic observation. He was quite becomingly at his ease, and his flower-droop was markedly successful—it was clearly one of his more

slender days; but I noticed that in the patched and tattered saloon, which had struck me as the topmost height of all the Romanism I had met with, the careful composition of his Roman clothing looked alien and singular. He may have been dressed in the taste of the real Rome, but the result was to make him appear as much of a stranger in the palace of the Dark Shops as the forlorn Marchesa herself. That good lady presently released him, and he made his way towards me —but with a signal to me to wait as he did so, for he stopped momentarily in passing beside the Marchesa's nephew and laid a light finger on his shoulder. The young seaman looked round, nodded familiarly and went on with his talk. I shall never get to the end of Deering, and I told him so when he joined me; for I didn't see how or where these excellent people should fit into the circle of his associations, those with which he had dazzled me when we met last month by the Tortoises. I had been supposing that *my* way, though it was he who had started me on it, was steadily leading me further from the world he had sketched so brilliantly as his own. Yes, said Deering, I might well be surprised; but he could assure me it was much more surprising to himself. He had no intention, however, of lingering— he proposed that I should come away with him at once. Could he fly so soon ?—it seemed abrupt, but he waved off my scruple and led me immediately to the Marchesa to take our leave. "Good-bye, Aunt Gertrude," he said—"I fear I must be going." "Good-bye, dear boy," returned the Marchesa; "come very soon and see me again."

He was the missing nephew!—the stroke of his revelation of the fact was thoroughly successful, for it

took me absurdly by surprise. My thought travelled back to the poor flimsy mountebanks of the Via Nazionale, and I perceived that they had divined my detached and scornful Deering, him with the gypsy in his blood, even more shrewdly than I had supposed—or rather, no doubt, they had had fuller information than mine. He had told them nothing, but they knew all about him, trust them—they knew how firmly his other foot was planted upon a solider world than theirs. When Deering and I now issued from the portal of the classic name I stopped him, I pointed to the name and the vast grey palace-front, and I asked him how he had had the face to talk to me in my innocence about his " real Rome " of the tram-lines and the plate-glass windows—with all this within a few yards of us at the very moment. Had he been ashamed of me, unwilling to present me to Aunt Gertrude and the monument of history up his sleeve ?—no indeed, and I didn't even put the question, for Deering's motives are much loftier than this. Rather it was magnificent of him, I confessed, to drop the palace, disregard the grandiose name, neglect it as unworthy of mention compared with the company of the mountebanks at the marble-topped table. But how he had deceived me—I now trusted his word no more, and I began to see trickery of some sort even in that chance encounter with him the other day by the English tea-room; he was probably then on his way to join the Marchesa in her afternoon drive on the Pincio. And it was he, perverse and double-lived, who had for a brother that soul of open candour I had just been studying. " I have never consented," said Deering rather primly, " to be judged in the light of my relations. I take my way, and I gave you the opportunity of taking

it too. You have bungled it so shockingly that it has brought you to this."

It had brought us in fact to the neighbouring Square of the Tortoises; there were the four boys crouched beneath the bowl of the fountain, clutching the tails of the tortoises in the ripple of the water, the dapple of the sunlight. Where would Deering's line have brought me if I had clung to him throughout? In the end, it would seem, to the palace of the Marchesa, which I had reached on my own account; what I may have missed on the way to it I shall never know. I could declare to him, none the less, that I had seen many things of singular mark, things that I should never have discovered in the state of romantic innocence which he had been the first to corrupt; and for this I thanked him, though on the matter of Rome's reality I was even now in confusion as deep as ever. My authorities wouldn't agree; and on the whole I maintained to Deering that my own romance, when now and then I had caught a glimpse of it between the heads of the crowd, had to my eye a more substantial look than most of the realities that had been offered me in the place of it. What had he to say to that? Well then he had to say, regretfully but distinctly, that I was incurable; and one of the Botticelli hands was laid upon my arm in a gesture that resigned me, with tenderness, with compassion, with finality, to the sad ravages of my illusion. "Go back to your books," he sighed; "I have done my best—good-bye!" It was touchingly felt and spoken; the attitude was striking. But his farewell, I am glad to say, was only rhetorical. We shuffled for a long while to and fro across the sunny little square, discussing my month of blunders.

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by J. W. N. Sullivan

¶ Although they deal with different aspects of various scientific ideas, the papers which make up this volume do illustrate, more or less, one point of view. This book tries to show one or two of the many reasons why science may be interesting for people who are not specialists as well as for those who are.

71. MASTRO-DON GESUALDO
Giovanni Verga. Translated by D. H. Lawrence

¶ Verga, who died in 1922, is recognized as one of the greatest of Italian writers of fiction. He can claim a place beside Hardy and the Russians. 'It is a fine full tale, a fine, full picture of life, with a bold beauty of its own which Mr. Lawrence must have relished greatly as he translated it.' *Observer*

72. THE MISSES MALLETT
by E. H. Young

¶ The virtue of this quiet and accomplished piece of writing lies in its quality and in its character-drawing; to summarize it would be to give no idea of its charm. Neither realism nor romance, it is a book by a writer of insight and sensibility.

73. SELECTED ESSAYS. First Series
by Sir Edmund Gosse, C.B.

¶ 'The prose of Sir Edmund Gosse is as rich in the colour of young imagination as in the mellow harmony of judgment. Sir Edmund Gosse's literary kit-kats will continue to be read with avidity long after the greater part of the academic criticism of the century is swept away upon the lumber-heap.' *Daily Telegraph*

74. WHERE THE BLUE BEGINS
by Christopher Morley

¶ A delicious satirical fantasy, in which humanity wears a dog-collar.

'Mr. Morley is a master of consequent inconsequence. His humour and irony are excellent, and his satire is only the more salient for the delicate and ingenuous fantasy in which it is set.' *Manchester Guardian*

75. JAVA HEAD
by Joseph Hergesheimer

¶ The author has created a connoisseur's world of his own; a world of colourful bric-à-brac—of ships and rustling silks and old New England houses—a world in which the rarest and most perplexing of emotions are caught and expressed for the perceptible moment as in austerely delicate porcelain. *Java Head* is a novel of grave and lasting beauty.

76. CONFESSIONS OF A YOUNG MAN
by George Moore

¶ 'Mr. Moore, true to his period and to his genius, stripped himself of everything that might stand between him and the achievement of his artistic object. He does not ask you to admire this George Moore. He merely asks you to observe him beyond good and evil as a constant plucked from the bewildering flow of eternity.' *Humbert Wolfe*

77. THE BAZAAR. Stories
by Martin Armstrong

¶ 'These stories have considerable range of subject, but in general they are stay-at-home tales, depicting cloistered lives and delicate finely fibred minds. . . . Mr. Armstrong writes beautifully.' *Nation and Athenæum*

78 SIDE SHOWS. Essays
by J. B. Atkins
With an Introduction by JAMES BONE

¶ Mr. J. B. Atkins was war correspondent in four wars, the London editor of a great English paper, then Paris correspondent of another, and latterly the editor of the *Spectator*. His subjects in *Side Shows* are briefly London and the sea.

79. SHORT TALKS WITH THE DEAD
by Hilaire Belloc

¶ In these essays Mr. Belloc attains his usual high level of pungent and witty writing. The subjects vary widely and include an imaginary talk with the spirits of Charles I, the barber of Louis XIV, and Napoleon, Venice, fakes, eclipses, Byron, and the famous dissertation on the Nordic Man.

80. ORIENT EXPRESS
by John dos Passos

¶ This book will be read because, as well as being the temperature chart of an unfortunate sufferer from the travelling disease, it deals with places shaken by the heavy footsteps of History, manifesting itself as usual by plague, famine, murder, sudden death and depreciated currency. Underneath the book is an ode to railroad travel.

81. SELECTED ESSAYS. Second Series
by Sir Edmund Gosse, C.B.

¶ A second volume of essays personally chosen by Sir Edmund Gosse from the wide field of his literary work. One is delighted with the width of his appreciation which enables him to write with equal charm on *Wycherley* and on *How to Read the Bible*.

82. ON THE EVE
by Ivan Turgenev. Translated by Constance Garnett

¶ In his characters is something of the width and depth which so astounds us in the creations of Shakespeare. *On the Eve* is a quiet work, yet over which the growing consciousness of coming events casts its heavy shadow. Turgenev, even as he sketched the ripening love of a young girl, has made us feel the dawning aspirations of a nation.

83. FATHERS AND CHILDREN
by Ivan Turgenev. Translated by Constance Garnett

¶ 'As a piece of art *Fathers and Children* is the most powerful of all Turgenev's works. The figure of Bazarov is not only the political centre of the book, but a figure in which the eternal tragedy of man's impotence and insignificance is realized in scenes of a most ironical human drama.' *Edward Garnett*

84. SMOKE
by Ivan Turgenev. Translated by Constance Garnett

¶ In this novel Turgenev sees and reflects, even in the shifting phases of political life, that which is universal in human nature. His work is compassionate, beautiful, unique; in the sight of his fellow-craftsmen always marvellous and often perfect.

85. PORGY. A Tale
by du Bose Heyward

¶ This fascinating book gives a vivid and intimate insight into the lives of a group of American negroes, from whom Porgy stands out, rich in humour and tragedy. The author's description of a hurricane is reminiscent in its power.

86. FRANCE AND THE FRENCH
by Sisley Huddleston

¶ 'There has been nothing of its kind published since the War. His book is a repository of facts marshalled with judgment; as such it should assist in clearing away a whole maze of misconceptions and prejudices, and serve as a sort of pocket encyclopædia of modern France.' *Times Literary Supplement*

88. CLOUD CUCKOO LAND. A Novel of Sparta
by Naomi Mitchison

¶ 'Rich and frank in passions, and rich, too, in the detail which helps to make feigned life seem real.' *Times Literary Supplement*

89. A PRIVATE IN THE GUARDS
by Stephen Graham

¶ In his own experiences as a soldier Stephen Graham has conserved the half-forgotten emotions of a nation in arms. Above all he makes us feel the stark brutality and horror of actual war, the valour which is more than valour, and the disciplined endurance which is human and therefore the more terrifying.

90. THUNDER ON THE LEFT
by Christopher Morley

¶ 'It is personal to every reader, it will become for every one a reflection of himself. I fancy that here, as always where work is fine and true, the author has created something not as he would but as he must, and is here an interpreter of a world more wonderful than he himself knows.' *Hugh Walpole*

91. THE MOON AND SIXPENCE
by Somerset Maugham

¶ A remarkable picture of a genius.
'Mr. Maugham has given us a ruthless and penetrating study in personality with a savage truthfulness of delineation and an icy contempt for the heroic and the sentimental.' *The Times*

92. THE CASUARINA TREE
by W. Somerset Maugham

¶ Intensely dramatic stories in which the stain of the East falls deeply on the lives of English men and women. Mr. Maugham remains cruelly aloof from his characters. On passion and its culminating tragedy he looks with unmoved detachment, ringing the changes without comment and yet with little cynicism.

93. A POOR MAN'S HOUSE
by Stephen Reynolds

¶ Vivid and intimate pictures of a Devonshire fisherman's life. 'Compact, harmonious, without a single—I won't say false—but uncertain note, true in aim, sentiment and expression, precise and imaginative, never precious, but containing here and there an absolutely priceless phrase. . . .' *Joseph Conrad*

94. WILLIAM BLAKE
by Arthur Symons

¶ When Blake spoke the first word of the nineteenth century there was none to hear it; and now that his message has penetrated the world, and is slowly re-making it, few are conscious of the man who first voiced it. This lack of knowledge is remedied in Mr. Symons' work.

95. A LITERARY PILGRIM IN ENGLAND
by Edward Thomas

¶ A book about the homes and resorts of English writers, from John Aubrey, Cowper, Gilbert White, Cobbett, Wordsworth, Burns, Borrow and Lamb, to Swinburne, Stevenson, Meredith, W. H. Hudson and H. Belloc. Each chapter is a miniature biography and at the same time a picture of the man and his work and environment.

96. NAPOLEON: THE LAST PHASE
by The Earl of Rosebery

¶ Of books and memoirs about Napoleon there is indeed no end, but of the veracious books such as this there are remarkably few. It aims to penetrate the deliberate darkness which surrounds the last act of the Napoleonic drama.

97. THE POCKET BOOK OF POEMS AND SONGS FOR THE OPEN AIR
Compiled by Edward Thomas

¶ This anthology is meant to please those lovers of poetry and the country who like a book that can always lighten some of their burdens or give wings to their delight, whether in the open air by day, or under the roof at evening; in it is gathered much of the finest English poetry.

98. SAFETY PINS: ESSAYS
by Christopher Morley
With an Introduction by H. M. TOMLINSON

¶ Very many readers will be glad of the opportunity to meet Mr. Morley in the rôle of the gentle essayist. He is an author who is content to move among his fellows, to note, to reflect, and to write genially and urbanely; to love words for their sound as well as for their value in expression of thought.

99. THE BLACK SOUL: A Novel
by Liam O'Flaherty

¶ '*The Black Soul* overwhelms one like a storm. . . . Nothing like it has been written by any Irish writer.' "Æ" in *The Irish Statesman*

100. CHRISTINA ALBERTA'S FATHER: A Novel
by H. G. Wells

¶ 'At first reading the book is utterly beyond criticism; all the characters are delightfully genuine.' *Spectator*

'Brimming over with Wellsian insight, humour and invention. No one but Mr. Wells could have written the whole book and given it such verve and sparkle.' *Westminster Gazette*

102. THE GRUB STREET NIGHTS ENTERTAINMENTS
by J. C. Squire

¶ Stories of literary life, told with a breath of fantasy and gaily ironic humour. Each character lives, and is the more lively for its touch of caricature. From *The Man Who Kept a Diary* to *The Man Who Wrote Free Verse*, these tales constitute Mr. Squire's most delightful ventures in fiction; and the conception of the book itself is unique.

103. ORIENTAL ENCOUNTERS
by Marmaduke Pickthall

¶ In *Oriental Encounters*, Mr. Pickthall relives his earlier manhood's discovery of Arabia and sympathetic encounters with the Eastern mind. He is one of the few travellers who really bridges the racial gulf.

105. THE MOTHER : A Novel
by Grazia Deledda
With an introduction by D. H. LAWRENCE

¶ An unusual book, both in its story and its setting in a remote Sardinian hill village, half civilized and superstitious. The action of the story takes place so rapidly and the actual drama is so interwoven with the mental conflict, and all so forced by circumstances, that it is almost Greek in its simple and inevitable tragedy.

106. TRAVELLER'S JOY : An Anthology
by W. G. Waters

¶ This anthology has been selected for publication in the Travellers' Library from among the many collections of verse because of its suitability for the traveller, particularly the summer and autumn traveller, who would like to carry with him some store of literary provender.

107. SHIPMATES : Essays
by Felix Riesenberg

¶ A collection of intimate character portraits of men with whom the author has sailed on many voyages. The sequence of studies blends into a fascinating panorama of living characters.

108. THE CRICKET MATCH
by Hugh de Selincourt

¶ Through the medium of a cricket match the author endeavours to give a glimpse of life in a Sussex village. First we have a bird's-eye view at dawn of the village nestling under the Downs ; then we see the players awaken in all the widely different circumstance of their various lives, pass the morning, assemble on the field, play their game, united for a few hours, as men should be, by a common purpose—and at night disperse.

109. RARE ADVENTURES AND PAINEFULL PEREGRINATIONS (1582–1645)
by William Lithgow
Edited, and with an Introduction by B. I. LAWRENCE

¶ This is the book of a seventeenth-century Scotchman who walked over the Levant, North Africa and most of Europe, including Spain, where he was tortured by the Inquisition. An unscrupulous man, full of curiosity, his comments are diverting and penetrating, his adventures remarkable.

110. THE END OF A CHAPTER
by Shane Leslie

¶ In this, his most famous book, Mr. Shane Leslie has preserved for future generations the essence of the pre-war epoch, its institutions and individuals. He writes of Eton, of the Empire, of Post-Victorianism, of the Politicians. . . . And whatever he touches upon, he brilliantly interprets.

111. SAILING ACROSS EUROPE
by Negley Farson
With an Introduction by FRANK MORLEY

¶ A voyage of six months across Europe in a ship, its one and only cabin measuring 8 feet by 6 feet. To go up the Rhine, down the Danube, passing from one to the other by the half-forgotten Ludwig's Canal, whence, through the portholes of a boat suited to a sea journey, one may look down on roofs and farms and roads and rivers winding far below. To think of and plan such a journey was a fine imaginative effort and to write about it interestingly is no mean accomplishment.

112. MEN, BOOKS AND BIRDS—Letters to a friend
by W. H. Hudson
With Notes, some Letters, and an Introduction by MORLEY ROBERTS

¶ An important collection of letters from the naturalist to his friend, literary executor and fellow-author, Morley Roberts, covering a period of twenty-five years.

113. PLAYS ACTING AND MUSIC
by Arthur Symons

¶ This book is a Book of Theories. It deals mainly with music and with the various arts of the stage. Mr. Arthur Symons does not understand the limitation by which so many writers on æsthetics choose to confine themselves to the study of artistic principles as they are seen in this or that separate form of art. Each art has its own laws, its own limits; these it is the business of the critic jealously to distinguish. Yet in the study of art as art, it should be his endeavour to master the universal science of beauty.

114. ITALIAN BACKGROUNDS
by Edith Wharton

¶ The title of Mrs. Wharton's book is self-explanatory. Her perception of beauty and her grace of writing are matters of general acceptance. The inclusion of this important book in the Travellers' Library has therefore only waited on the necessary arrangements being completed with the original publishers of the work.

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Note

The Travellers' Library is now published as a joint enterprise by Jonathan Cape Ltd. and William Heinemann Ltd. The new volumes announced here to appear during the autumn of 1928 include those to be published by both firms. The series as a whole or any title in the series can be ordered through booksellers from either Jonathan Cape or William Heinemann. Booksellers' only care must be not to duplicate their orders.

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